

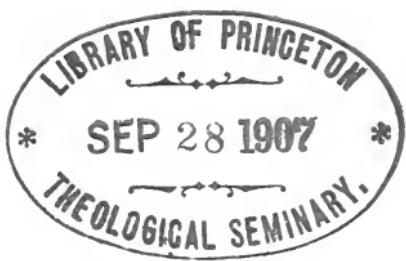
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

AND THE

EPISTLES OF PAUL

*ARRANGED IN THE
FORM OF A CONTINUOUS NARRATIVE*

BY ELIAS MORRISON, M.A., LL.D.



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The Acts of the Apostles and
the Epistles of Paul







THE
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
AND
THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

ARRANGED IN THE FORM OF A CONTINUOUS HISTORY.

WITH
NOTES CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY, A GAZETTEER OF PLACES, AND
QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

✓ BY
THOMAS MORRISON, M.A., LL.D.,
RECTOR, FREE CHURCH NORMAL COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

THIRD EDITION, REVISED.

EDINBURGH AND LONDON
OLIPHANT, ANDERSON & FERRIER.

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PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

A THIRD EDITION of this work having been called for, the author reproduces so much of the original preface as will serve to indicate the general scope and design of the work :—

“For several years past, the writer of the following pages has had to prepare classes of young men and women for a somewhat testing examination on the Acts of the Apostles. To do this in a satisfactory way, he was obliged to enter on a somewhat extensive course of reading, embracing the careful study of the most important works on the subject.

“Whilst we possess many admirable commentaries, either on the whole New Testament or on detached portions thereof,—foremost among which may be named those of Alford and Ellicot, who have placed the Christian Church of this country under the deepest obligations by their devout and scholarly expositions of the Word of God,—we have no work which gives in small compass, and in a way accessible to the general reader, the results of modern investigation into the history of the Acts, and especially the relation which subsists between that history and the Epistles of Paul. There are few, even among those who may be reckoned persons of good education, who have any accurate knowledge of the history of Paul’s letters, and of the circumstances which called them forth. And this arises, not so much from want of interest in the subject, as from the fragmentary and disjointed notices on these

points which appear in the large proportion of our popular commentaries—notices so disjointed as to be practically of little value to the very persons for whom they are intended. The want of a work—at once critical and popular—which he might use in his own classes, induced the author to arrange the material which circumstances required him to prepare, and to put it forth in the shape in which it now appears.

“The general plan of the work is this:—Luke’s narrative is assumed as the basis, and everything which is necessary to explain his history is introduced into the text, except in a few cases where this could not be done without having recourse to the original, or to explanations, which, though of importance, were not essential to a right understanding of the narrative. In such cases, and in such alone, notes have been given. As supplementary to the information supplied by Luke, recourse has been had to the letters of Paul; and, in every instance, the circumstances which gave occasion to these letters have been detailed. In this part of his subject, the author has to acknowledge his obligations to the admirable work of Conybeare and Howson on ‘The Life and Epistles of St. Paul,’—a work characterised by ripe scholarship, and an appreciation of the oracles of God as hearty as it is reassuring, at a time when the self-styled ‘leaders of modern thought’ are endeavouring to convince themselves that the theology of Paul will not suit the requirements of the nineteenth century.

“As the right understanding of the history is intimately connected with an acquaintance, more or less minute, of the various places mentioned, a Gazetteer of Places has been appended to the work, in which every locality occurring in the text is noticed and briefly described. It is believed that these descriptive notices, taken in conjunction with the map, will help the reader to realise more vividly the course of events,

and to follow with greater interest the footsteps of the first preachers of the Cross.

“A series of questions has been given, with the view of suggesting lines of examination, whether the book be used publicly or privately.”

The foregoing extracts express with sufficient clearness the object the author had before him in compiling the following pages. It has been his desire to narrate, in clear and simple language, the progress of the Church as detailed in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of Paul. From these two sources of information he has attempted to weave a connected narrative, told in such a way as to serve the purposes both of a history and of an exposition.

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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, ETC.

IN A CONTINUOUS HISTORY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE WRITER OF THE ACTS.

It is almost universally allowed that the writer of the Acts is identical with the author of the third Gospel (Acts i. 1, compared with Luke i. 3). The belief has been well-nigh equally universal that the author of that Gospel was St. Luke. From the very earliest times it has been attributed to him, and no arguments have ever been brought forward sufficient even to disturb this opinion.

Some attempts have, indeed, been made to prove that either Timothy or Silas was the writer of the Acts ; but these attempts have signally failed. That Timothy was not the writer may be conclusively shown from an examination of Acts xx. 1-6. In that passage Timothy, along with several others, is said to have sailed from Philippi, and to have tarried for "*us*" at Troas—language which could not have been used on the hypothesis that Timothy himself was the narrator. It may be equally conclusively shown that Silas was not the author. Silas was conjoined with Paul in his second missionary tour (Acts xv. 40), and his presence with the apostle can be traced to Corinth (Acts xviii. 5) ; after which his name never occurs in the history. In the account of this tour, the narrative proceeds in the third person

until the arrival in Troas, where, for the first time, it is changed into the first (Acts xvi. 10). It continues in the first person until the departure from Philippi, where the third person is again resumed (Acts xvii. 1). Now, it is inconceivable that Silas, on the hypothesis that he was the historian, should in one passage speak of himself and his companions as “they” (Acts xvi. 4; xvii. 1), and in another as “we” (Acts xvi. 10), when he himself was present all the time.

We may conclude, therefore, that Luke was the writer both of the history of the Acts and of the Gospel which bears his name. The notices of Luke which appear in the Epistles of Paul are in entire harmony with this conclusion. We learn (Col. iv. 14) that Luke was with Paul in Rome during his first imprisonment—a fact singularly in accordance with what we read in Acts xxviii. 16, where we are distinctly informed that the historian accompanied Paul to Rome. Again, we learn (Philem. 24) that Luke was a fellow-labourer with the apostle. There is no very specific information given in the Acts regarding the labours of the writer; but one passage (Acts xvi. 10) puts it beyond doubt that he was a preacher of the gospel. Finally, Paul terms Luke “the beloved physician” (Col. iv. 14). And it has to be noticed, in connection with this expression, that the description of diseases given in the Acts is so graphic, minute, and even technical, that it is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that he who so described them was himself a physician. It will be sufficient, in support of the statement we have made, to call the reader’s attention to two such descriptive notices (Acts iii. 7; xxviii. 8).

Of Luke’s personal history little is known beyond what is recorded in the Acts, and in the Epistles of Paul. Tradition assigns Antioch in Syria as his native place. There is nothing in the Acts to contradict this tradition; on the contrary, it is borne out by the fact that the writer shows an intimate acquaintance with Antioch—an acquaintance which manifests itself in minute touches of description, betraying the hand of an eye-witness. In giving the list of deacons, he appends to the name of Nicholas the expression, “a proselyte of Antioch.” In

the account of the planting of the Church in Antioch (Acts xi. 19-30), we have such details recorded as would naturally be given by one who was on the spot, and described what he saw. He is supposed to have been a Gentile. In the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul gives a list of names, and mentions that they were of the circumcision (Col. iv. 10); and thereafter he mentions Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, in such a way as to show that they were not of the circumcision (Col. iv. 12-14). From the acquaintance which he displays with Jewish manners and customs, especially in his Gospel, it has been imagined that, though originally a Gentile, Luke became a proselyte previous to his conversion to Christianity. When or by whom he was converted cannot be ascertained. By profession he was a physician (Col. iv. 14); and this fact may account for the purity of his style as compared with other New Testament writers.

The earliest historical mention of Luke occurs in Acts xvi. 10; unless, indeed, we suppose him to have included himself in the “we” of Acts xiv. 22. In that case, his first connection with Paul would have been during his first journey, in the neighbourhood of Antioch in Pisidia. The remarkably full and minute account of the apostle’s doings in the Pisidian Antioch, given in Acts xiii., would lend some countenance to the view that the writer was an eye-witness of the scenes so graphically portrayed. But, however this may be, there is no doubt that he joined Paul and his companions, in the second journey, at Troas (Acts xvi. 10), and accompanied them to Philippi (Acts xvi. 12). The account in Acts xvi. 11, of the voyage from Troas to Neapolis would, it has been well remarked, be of itself sufficient to indicate the presence of the writer, especially when contrasted with the brevity of the narrative up to the point at which Luke appears on the scene. He continued with Paul during his residence in Philippi; but when the apostle departed from the town, Luke was left behind (Acts xvii. 1). After an interval of about six years, we again find him with Paul in Philippi (Acts xx. 6). We have no means of ascertaining how he was occupied during this interval. If we could suppose the

subscription to the Second Epistle to the Corinthians to be genuine, we might have some reason to conclude that on Paul's arrival in Macedonia, after the uproar in Ephesus (Acts xx. 1), he found Luke in Philippi, and sent him along with Titus to Corinth, as the bearer of the Second Epistle to that Church. In this case, Luke would be identified with that brother "whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches," spoken of in 2 Cor. viii. 18. But no reliance can be placed on the subscriptions to the Epistles, and it is altogether unsafe to construct history on the insecure foundation which they afford. We know as a fact, that, on the apostle's return to Asia, at the close of his third journey, Luke joined him at Philippi (Acts xx. 6), and accompanied him to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17). His presence is unmistakably indicated by the minuteness of detail which characterises this portion of the narrative.

From the time of Paul's arrival in Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17) until the commencement of the voyage to Rome (Acts xxvii. 1), a period of fully two years, we have no trace of Luke. But from the very fact that he joins Paul at Cæsarea when he embarks for Rome, it has been, with every degree of probability, conjectured that he spent these two years either in Cæsarea or its neighbourhood. Nor need we be at any loss to divine the nature of his employments. He tells us (Luke i. 3) that he had carefully examined, from their very beginning, those things which were most surely believed among Christians ; and we may well conclude that this examination was conducted during the two years of Paul's imprisonment in Cæsarea. The time was amply sufficient—the opportunities lay to his hand. "The eye witnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke i. 2) could be found nowhere so naturally as in Palestine, the scene of all the Gospel history. We see no reason to call in question the conjecture, amounting almost to a certainty, that Luke employed the two years alluded to in collecting the materials for, and in all likelihood publishing, his Gospel.

When Paul was sent to Rome, Luke accompanied him (Acts xxvii. 1); and to this we owe the remarkably graphic and detailed account of the apostle's voyage to Rome and shipwreck.

He went the whole way to Rome (Acts xxviii. 16). We find his name mentioned in two of the epistles written from Rome during this first imprisonment (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24); but beyond these passing notices, we have no authentic information regarding his doings in Rome.

From the fact that he does not record the issue of Paul's appeal to Rome, it has been with great probability imagined that the *Acts* was published before the issue was determined. It seems to us that in no other way can we account for his silence on a point most interesting in itself, and to which, apparently, the whole history was leading us on. If this supposition be correct, then we may well conceive that the two years spoken of in *Acts* xxviii. 30, were employed by Luke in arranging and giving to the world his second great work, the *Acts of the Apostles*.

When we pass beyond the period of the first Roman imprisonment, almost all authentic history regarding Luke terminates. Only once is his name again mentioned (2 Tim. iv. 11); but the notice is full of the deepest interest. Paul is a second time in prison in Rome; his friends are deserting him; a deep sense of his loneliness induces him to write for his beloved Timothy; and, in doing so, he incidentally mentions that Luke alone, of all his friends, had stood by him at this, the most critical time in all his life. This notice tells of the affection of Luke for Paul—an affection which time could not weaken, nor dangers destroy. His history after this is a blank. Tradition says that he died a natural death at the age of eighty-four.

TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

We have incidentally remarked already that we can only account for Luke's silence regarding the issue of Paul's trial, on the supposition that the *Acts* was published before that issue was determined. If this supposition be correct, we can fix the date of the composition of this book with very considerable accuracy. Paul arrived in Rome in the spring of A.D. 61, and the history closes with the announcement that he remained in

Rome two whole years in his own hired house. This brings us down to the spring of A.D. 63, which may be regarded as the date of writing the book.

By some recent critics a much later origin than what we have supposed has been assigned to the Acts. This has arisen from their desire to get quit of everything like prophecy in the New Testament. It is perfectly manifest, from the introduction to the Acts, that it was written after the Gospel of Luke. On our supposition, accordingly, the Gospel must have been written before A.D. 63; that is, some years before the fall of Jerusalem. But if the Gospel was thus written before the fall of Jerusalem, then Luke xix. 43, 44, and particularly xxi. 24, must be prophecy of the most distinct kind. To avoid this conclusion, the critics we speak of place the composition of the Acts far down in the first century, so as to admit of the composition of the Gospel *after* the destruction of Jerusalem. Such views require no serious refutation.

Various places have been assigned for the composition of the book. Rome seems the most natural. Luke was there with Paul, and had, in so far as we know, ample time to arrange his materials, and to put them into the shape in which we now possess them. But it must be admitted that this view is by no means universally accepted. In the Epistle to the Philippians, written towards the close of Paul's first imprisonment, and about the time which we have assigned for the composition of the Acts, Luke's name does not appear, while in the Epistles written at an earlier period of that imprisonment, he is mentioned as being in Rome (Col. iv. 14; Philem. 24). From this it has been imagined that Luke left Rome before the close of the two years spoken of, Acts xxviii. 30. Some have supposed that he went to Philippi, where, as we have seen, he had spent some six years, and that he is the "true yoke-fellow" of Phil. iv. 3. If this be so, then the book may have been written in Philippi, and sent to Theophilus from that city. Others suppose that it was written in Antioch. In this diversity of opinion, it would be rash to dogmatise, but to our mind the balance of probability is in favour of Rome.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS.

The chronology of the Acts is beset with considerable difficulty. We have various notes of time given in the book, but few central fixed dates from which to proceed in our calculations. There are two events recorded in the Acts, the dates of which are pretty well agreed upon by all writers on this subject. These are, the death of Herod Agrippa, recorded Acts xii. 23 ; and the recall of Felix, recorded Acts xxiv. 27. Herod died A.D. 44, and Felix was recalled A.D. 60. Now, the death of Herod coincided very nearly with Paul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, when, in company with Barnabas, he was sent to Jerusalem with the contribution from the Church in Antioch (Acts xi. 30, compared with Acts xii. 25). This visit, accordingly, was about A.D. 44. But previous to it, Paul had spent one whole year in Antioch (Acts xi. 26), and three years in Arabia and Damascus (Gal. i. 18). His conversion could not, accordingly, have been later than A.D. 39. But this calculation does not take into account his journey from Jerusalem to Tarsus (Acts ix. 30), nor the time spent in Tarsus before Barnabas went in search of him (Acts xi. 25). We must allow somewhere about two years for the time thus occupied, and this will place his conversion about A.D. 37, the time usually assigned to it.

Paul's third visit to Jerusalem took place fourteen years after his conversion (Gal. ii. 1). This visit is the same as that recorded in Acts xv., when he was sent as a deputy to consult the Church in Jerusalem on the question of circumcision. If his conversion was in A.D. 37, this visit must have taken place in A.D. 50, the year of his conversion being reckoned as one of the fourteen.

The recall of Felix took place in A.D. 60. At that date the apostle had been a prisoner for two years in Cæsarea (Acts xxiv. 27). His arrest in Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 33) must, accordingly, have been in A.D. 58. From a comparison of 1 Cor. xvi. 8, with Acts xx. 1-6, it is evident that the apostle left Ephesus in the summer of the year preceding his arrest in Jerusalem. His departure from Ephesus (Acts xx. 1) was accordingly in A.D. 57.

His stay in Ephesus embraced a period of two years and three months (Acts xix. 8, compared with Acts xix. 10). His arrival in Ephesus, accordingly, must have been in A.D. 55.

We have thus seen that the visit to Jerusalem recorded Acts xv. was in A.D. 50, and his arrival in Ephesus (Acts xix. 1) was in A.D. 55. Between these two dates we have a period of time amply sufficient to cover all the events recorded in Acts xv. 35 to xviii. 28; but it is almost impossible to arrange the incidents of this period with strict chronological accuracy. In the table which we subjoin we have endeavoured to harmonise them as far as possible with the notes of time given by the historian.

The recall of Felix was in A.D. 60. In the spring of the following year Paul arrived in Rome (Acts xxvii. 9, compared with Acts xxviii. 11). The arrival in Rome was thus in A.D. 61. Paul remained two whole years in his own hired house in Rome, at the end of which time we believe he was released. His release will thus fall in A.D. 63. His death, according to tradition, took place about A.D. 67, which leaves an interval of about four years between his first and second imprisonments.

The Book of the Acts may, in accordance with the hints given in the preceding paragraphs, be arranged chronologically as follows:—

	A.D.
Acts i.-viii.,	30-37
Acts ix.-xii.,	37-44
Acts xiii.-xv.,	44-50
Acts xvi.-xviii.,	50-55
Acts xix.-xxi. 17,	55-58
Acts xxi. 17-xxvi.,	58-60
Acts xxvii., xxviii.,	60-63

The following chronological table of details, taken in the main from Mr. Birk's admirable edition of Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, contains as near an approximation to the actual facts of the case as we believe can be given:—

	A.D.
The first Pentecost,	30
The death of Stephen,	36
The conversion of Saul,	37
St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem,	40

	A.D.
Conversion of Cornelius,	41
Barnabas at Antioch,	42
St. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem,	44
Death of Herod,	44
First journey of Paul begins,	45
Return to Antioch,	47
Council at Jerusalem,	50
Second journey begins,	51
St. Paul crosses into Europe,	52
St. Paul in Corinth,	52
First Epistle to Thessalonica,	53
Second Epistle to Thessalonica,	53
St. Paul returns to Antioch,	54
Third journey begins,	54
Arrival in Ephesus,	55
First Epistle to Corinth,	57
Departure from Ephesus,	57
Second Epistle to Corinth,	57
Arrival in Corinth,	57
Epistle to Galatians,	58
Epistle to Romans,	58
Arrest in Jerusalem,	58
Recall of Felix,	60
Voyage to Rome begins,	60
Shipwreck at Malta,	60
Arrival at Rome,	61
Epistle to Ephesians,	62
Epistle to Colossians,	62
Epistle to Philemon,	62
Epistle to Philippians,	63
St. Paul's release,	63
Apprehension a second time,	66
Death of St. Paul,	67

CHAPTER I.

THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM.

ACTS I.-VII. A.D. 30-36.

THE Gospel contains an account of "all that Jesus began both *1. The resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus.* to do and to teach." The Book of the Acts narrates the history of the rise and progress of that spiritual kingdom which it was Christ's object to establish on the earth. The former details the planting of the seed from which the Christian Church sprung; the latter shows us that seed taking root in the world, and growing until it becomes a goodly tree. The resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus are the links which bind the two together, and accordingly, the history in the Acts commences with a brief notice of these important events. Our Lord having, according to his frequently announced predictions, risen from the grave on the third day, did not forthwith return to his Father. He continued on the earth for a period of forty days; during which he showed himself alive by many infallible signs, and gave to the apostles whom he had chosen instructions in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. On the last occasion on which he met with them, he led them out of Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives. Having given them a commandment not to depart from Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Holy Ghost, he was taken from them, and a cloud received him out of their sight. The apostles were evidently unprepared for this departure of their Lord. They stood in rapt amazement, rooted to the spot, gazing wistfully into heaven. While thus engaged, a vision of angels appeared unto them, who, after gently upbraiding them for their un-

lief, as manifested by their bewilderment at what they had seen, assured them that the same Jesus who was taken from them into heaven, should come again in like manner as they had seen him ascend. The apostles thereupon worshipped their now glorified Lord, and returned with great joy to Jerusalem, there to await the fulfilment of the promise of the Holy Ghost.

Between the ascension of our Lord and the descent of the Spirit, an interval of ten days elapsed. This interval was spent in prayer and supplication. *2. Election of a successor to Judas.* The little company of believers in Jerusalem, numbering in all about one hundred and twenty persons, assembled in an upper room, and poured out their hearts continually before God. It is interesting to remember that a power, which has already achieved such marvellous results, and whose triumphs are destined to be greater still, had a beginning apparently so insignificant. If this power had been of men, it could have done nothing. Only one public act is recorded to have taken place during the ten days in which the Church waited for the fulfilment of Christ's promise,—this was the election of a successor to Judas. Peter, after narrating the miserable end of the traitor,* proposed to the assembled brethren that they should elect one in his room, to be a witness with them of the resurrection. It is of importance to notice that thus early the resurrection is the grand subject of apostolic witness-bearing. The choice of the Church was to be limited to those who had companied with them *all the time* that the Lord Jesus had gone in and out among them. Two were nominated—Joseph called Barsabas, and Matthias; and the final decision was determined by lot. After solemn prayer to God, lots were cast, and Matthias was chosen, who was henceforward numbered among the eleven. Of his subsequent history nothing whatever is known. His name never again meets us in the New Testament.

* Peter's account differs materially from that given by Matthew, who says that Judas, stung with bitter remorse, threw down the money which the Sanhedrim had given him as the price of his treachery, and went and hanged himself, and that the chief priests bought the potter's field (Matt. xxvii. 3-8). It is perhaps impossible now to reconcile the two accounts.

The apostles do not seem to have known the exact time when our Lord's promise regarding the Holy Ghost was to receive its fulfilment. To keep them in an attitude of expectant watchfulness, he had simply told them that they would be endowed with power from on high at no distant day.* The promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost—ten days after our Lord's ascension. On the morning of that day the disciples were all assembled in one place. We cannot, from any hints furnished by the history, determine the precise locality where the brethren were gathered together on this memorable occasion. It may have been in some room attached to the temple, or in the upper room where they were in the habit of meeting since our Lord's ascension (Acts i. 13). But we are left in no doubt regarding the remarkable nature of the manifestations with which this important event in the Church's history was accompanied. There came suddenly, and unmistakably from heaven, the sound *as of* a rushing mighty wind, and† filled all the house where they were assembled. Then there appeared cloven tongues *as of* fire, and it‡ sat upon each of them. As an immediate effect of this outpouring of the Holy Ghost, of whose quickening and energising power these outward signs were significant emblems, they spake with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. In connection with this gift of tongues, it has to be noticed that it was not conferred with the view of enabling these first Christians more readily to preach the Gospel among the various nations of the earth, but simply as a sign to those who believed not (1 Cor. xiv. 22). Nowhere, either in the Acts or in the Epistles, do we read of their using this power in the mere proclamation of the truth to those who were outside the pale of the Christian Church. It was an exercise confined to believers as such, and seems to have been employed principally in prayer and praise (Acts ii. 11; 1 Cor. xiv. 15). On the present occasion, the disciples, on being made

* Οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας (Acts i. 5);—nearly equal to our expression, "One of these days."

† That is, the sound, not the wind.

‡ That is, the phenomenon or appearance.

partakers of the heavenly gift, did not go forth and address the multitude. They continued where they were, and in various tongues spoke the wonderful works of God. The people came to them, attracted, without doubt, by the sound which accompanied the descent of the Spirit, and which would appear to have been heard over a great part of the city.* Jerusalem, as the capital, and as containing the temple, had always within its walls, and especially at the time of the great annual festivals, devout strangers from almost every country under heaven. On the present occasion there were many such in the town. Having collected round the place where the disciples were engaged in speaking the wonderful works of God, they were filled with amazement at what they saw and heard. Doubt mingled with their amazement. The whole matter was utterly beyond their comprehension. Some of the more sober-minded gave expression to their bewilderment by the question, “What meaneth this?” while others, who were probably in the habit of mocking at everything divine, found a ready explanation in the coarse taunt, “These men are full of new wine.”

Peter, with no trace of his former cowardice, came boldly forward to vindicate himself and his fellow-disciples from the foul aspersion. His address

4. *Address of Peter.*

is a remarkable instance of the fulfilment of our Lord’s promise, that, in time of need, wisdom would be given them, which their enemies would not be able to gainsay or resist. The address served a double purpose. It gave a thoroughly satisfactory explanation of the events then transpiring; and, at the same time, was so constructed as to force home on his hearers the conviction that they had murdered the Lord of Glory. Of this address, so pointed and telling, and withal so powerfully effective the following is a summary:—

The apostle first denies the charge brought against them of being drunk, and assigns what, to a Jewish audience, must have

* Γενομένης δε τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης (Acts ii. 6) literally means: “*This voice having taken place;*” and, it seems to us, can only refer to the sound spoken of in verse 2. No one had left the room where the disciples were assembled. It is altogether likely that some such sign should have accompanied the important events of this day.

been satisfactory evidence on this point (Acts ii. 14, 15). In the second place, he shows that the events then occurring were the fulfilment of prophecy ; and he quotes as a case in point the remarkable prophecy contained in Joel ii. 28-32 (Acts ii. 16-21). In the third place, he demonstrates that this prophecy had now received its fulfilment in and through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This, which forms the main point of his address, he does in the following manner :—He gives a brief account of the life of Jesus, referring, however, to but a few of his more prominent actions, as, in its main outline, his life was well known to the bulk of his hearers. He states the fact of his death, and charges them with the crime of having crucified and slain him (Acts ii. 22, 23). He then states as a historical fact, his resurrection, and vouches for it by the testimony of himself and others who had seen him alive after his passion. This fact in the history of the man Jesus was in exact accordance with Old Testament prophecy regarding the Christ ; in proof whereof he quotes a passage from Ps. xvi., which he shows conclusively could not apply to the writer of that psalm (Acts ii. 24-32). He then proceeds to state, as a historical fact, his ascension ; and proves by a reference to Ps. cx., that this fact in the history of Jesus also coincided with Old Testament prophecy regarding the Messiah (Acts ii. 33-35). Seeing, therefore, that there was this exact coincidence between the history of the man Jesus and the prophecies regarding the Christ, the conclusion was inevitable, that “*God had made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ ;*” who being thus exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, had shed forth that which they both saw and heard (Acts ii. 36).

Before passing on to notice the effect produced by this

5 Prominence given to the resurrection. remarkable address, we may pause for a moment to consider the important place which the

doctrine of the resurrection holds in all the teaching of the early Church. It forms the very centre of the argument here, and in the somewhat similar address of Paul to the Jews of Antioch (Acts xiii.). Indeed all through the Acts, especially when Jews are addressed, we find this doctrine to be

the turning-point of apostolic teaching. We have a brief formula for the substance of every sermon delivered to Jews in the account of Paul's preaching at Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 3). Even when pure Gentiles were addressed, the resurrection was the crowning proof of all apostolic averments (Acts xvii. 31); and how constantly they dwelt upon it we may learn from this, that the only point in connection with early Christianity which made an impression on Festus was certain questions about one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive (Acts xxv. 19). The reason for the prominence thus attached to this fact is obvious. On its truth the whole question of Christianity turned. If Jesus did not rise, then the apostles were witnesses to a lie, and a lie of the deepest aggravation; for they called on men to stake their everlasting destinies, and to lean for their soul's salvation, on one who was dead (1 Cor. xv. 3-19).

Peter's address, we have remarked, had a twofold purpose in view. It accounted for the miraculous events of Pentecost, and, at the same time, gave him the opportunity of convincing his hearers of their awful guilt in crucifying their own Messiah. By a process of close and remorseless reasoning, he demonstrated that Jesus was the Christ, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. The crucifixion of Jesus, accordingly, was not that of a mere ordinary man, but of the Son of God himself. This conviction having, by the accompanying grace of the Holy Spirit, been forced home on the consciences of the multitude, we need feel no surprise to be told that they were pricked in their heart, and cried out in an agony of remorse, "What shall we do?" Christ came to send a sword on the earth, but he is also the Prince of Peace. And his faithful ministers follow ever in their Master's footsteps. They wound, but only to heal. They are set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel. Peter, whilst he hesitated not to assert the enormity of their guilt, had words of comfort and consolation even for the murderers of Jesus, provided only they repented. On condition of their repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus, he assured them of the forgiveness of their sins, and promised

*6. Results of
Peter's address.*

them the like gift as had been granted to himself and his fellow-apostles. Three thousand gladly received the word, and were baptised ; and thus, even already, the little stone was increasing in size, and Christ's words were receiving a marvellous fulfilment : “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, *it bringeth forth much fruit*” (John xii. 24).

These first converts had, as yet, no idea of renouncing their

7. *First miracle. — Peter's address to the people.* connection with the Mosaic ritual. They continued daily with one accord in the temple ; and the apostles themselves were in the habit of

attending the regular morning and evening services (Acts iii. 1). It was on the occasion of one of their visits to the temple that the first recorded miracle took place. A man, lame from his birth, was daily carried and laid at the gate of the temple which was called Beautiful,* for the purpose of soliciting alms from the passers in and out. As Peter and John passed into the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon—the time of the evening sacrifice—he asked alms of them. Peter, guided no doubt by immediate inspiration from on high, and relying on his Master's promised help for the issue, commanded him to look on them. The poor man, expecting to receive merely pecuniary assistance, gladly obeyed ; but his expectations must have been dashed when Peter assured him that he could give him neither silver nor gold. But he had it in his power to confer greater blessings than any which money could procure. He could impart strength to his feeble limbs, and cause him to stand erect on his feet. In the name of Jesus, he commanded him to rise up and walk ; and at the same time, to satisfy the man that he was in earnest, he took him by the hand and lifted him up. The cure was instantaneous. His feet and ankle-bones received strength. The joy of the man, in being thus miraculously cured, manifested itself in the most natural way imaginable. He could not contain himself, but gave vent to his

* It is impossible to fix, with any accuracy, which gate this was. Some suppose it to be Nicanor's gate mentioned by Josephus, B. J. v. 5. Others, the gate Susan, which lay close to Solomon's Porch. It must have been a well-frequented gate, otherwise the lame man would not have been placed there.

delight and gratitude by walking, and leaping, and praising God. The temple, at that hour, was crowded with worshippers. If we suppose the miracle to have been performed during the feast of Pentecost, the temple courts would have been more than ordinarily thronged. The multitude in passing into the temple had seen the lame man occupying his usual post. His face was quite familiar to the ordinary frequenters of the holy place. Great, accordingly, must have been their astonishment to behold him in company with the two apostles, no longer feeble and decrepit, but in the possession of perfect soundness, which he was exhibiting in a way which could not fail to attract universal notice. They followed Peter and John into Solomon's Porch, and gazed upon them with a look of amazement and incredulity, scarcely daring to trust the evidence of their own senses. Peter at once seized the opportunity of turning their attention from himself to Jesus, who had been the means of the man's cure, and delivered an address, of which the following summary may be given :—

“This miracle is no work of ours. It has been effected by God—the God of our fathers—who has glorified his Son Jesus, whom ye slew, but whom God hath raised from the dead. Faith in the name of this risen Jesus has been this man's cure (Acts iii. 12-16). I admit that you put him to death in ignorance ; that is, not believing that he was the Messiah : but this ignorance of yours God has overruled for the accomplishment of his previously announced purposes” (Acts iii. 17, 18). On this plea of ignorance he bases his call to them to repent and be saved by this Jesus at His coming ; and shows that their conversion was connected with the coming of the times of refreshing, and with the second appearance of our Lord, who, in the meantime, has gone to heaven, there to remain until the time of the restitution of all things (Acts iii. 19-21).* “These times have been the theme of all prophecy from Samuel downwards ; and

* As a commentary on these somewhat difficult verses, compare Rom. xi., particularly verses 11-26, and 1 Cor. xv. 24-28. The heavens still receive the Lord Jesus, and we have not yet experienced the times of refreshing spoken of by Peter. The Church has had many foretastes of these times ; but, at the best, they have been the first drops of the plentiful rain.

God has given proof that the blessings they spake of were intended for you, in the very fact that, in sending His Son into the world, He sent Him first to you, in order to bless you by turning every one of you from his iniquities."

Peter was not allowed to finish his discourse. The priests, 8. *Arrest of the captain of the temple,* and the Sadducean Peter and John.* portion of the Sanhedrim, arrested himself and John, and put them both in ward. The preaching of the resurrection was that which brought upon them the enmity of the Sadducees. Their enmity, however, could not arrest the good work. The converts increased rapidly, and already numbered five thousand. On the morning after the performance of the miracle, an extraordinary meeting of the Sanhedrim was summoned. Matters were urgent. If it should turn out that Jesus was really alive, the last error would be worse than the first (Matt. xxvii. 64). Caiaphas, the president of the council, was deeply interested in putting an effectual stop to the preaching of these men. It was at his instance that Jesus was apprehended and slain (John xi. 49-53). Accordingly, his friends mustered strong on the occasion. Indeed, it has been suggested, with every degree of probability, that the meeting of the Sanhedrim was packed for the occasion. Be this as it may, when the court was constituted, the two apostles were brought forward and interrogated regarding the miracle. The reply of Peter was clear, firm, and at the same time thoroughly respectful. He addressed the Sanhedrim as "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel." While stating that the miracle was performed in the name of Jesus, he took the opportunity of charging them with the crime of crucifying him, and announced at the same time the fact of his resurrection. Nor was this all. Not only had God raised him from the dead—than which no statement could have been more distasteful to his judges—but salvation was attainable in no other way than by belief in him whom they had rejected, but whom God had raised from the dead.

The Sanhedrim were utterly confounded by the bold appear-

* Not a military officer, but the superintendent of the guard of priests and Levites who kept watch by night in the temple. His duty was to visit the posts during the night, and see that the sentries were doing their duty.

ance of the two unlearned and ignorant men.* It was only when, upon reflection, they recognised them as having been once with Jesus, that they were able, in any measure to comprehend the spirit which animated them. Their difficulty was increased, inasmuch as the man who had been healed had taken his place beside the prisoners, and it was utterly impossible to deny the reality of his cure. Having ordered the apostles to withdraw from the council-chamber, they deliberated earnestly upon the most effective method of arresting the preaching in the name of Jesus. There is little doubt but extreme measures would have been resorted to, and that they who sought to kill Lazarus, “because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away and believed on Jesus” (John xii. 10, 11), would not have scrupled to put the apostles to death, had they not been restrained by dread of popular feeling. Accordingly, it was deemed more politic simply to lay an interdict on the preachers, and to charge them neither to preach nor to teach in the name of Jesus. But they were judging the apostles by themselves, and must have been grievously disappointed when Peter boldly stated that in conscience he could not obey this injunction. He had his authority to preach from a higher source than the Sanhedrim, and necessity was laid upon him to preach the things which he had seen and heard. The Sanhedrim, repeating their threatenings, were obliged to dismiss them. On reaching their own company, the two apostles narrated all that had happened, and then, with one voice, prayer was offered to God that he would grant unto them all boldness in witnessing for the truth—a prayer which was immediately answered by a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, endowing them with that very power which they had asked. The Sanhedrim were baffled. They were unable to take the measure of the Church, simply because they refused to admit conscience as an element in their calculations. And so it has ever been in the Church’s contendings with mere worldly rulers. Conscience is put out of court, and their machinations issue in defeat.

* *Ιδιωτης*, not absolutely “ignorant,” but the word of contrast to those professionally acquainted with any matter.—(Alford). Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 16.

At this point in his narrative Luke gives a graphic glimpse of the internal condition of the Church. The first Christian converts were distinguished by their steadfast attendance on the teaching of the apostles. They lived together as one family, had frequent love feasts, accompanied probably with the celebration of the Lord's supper, and were much in prayer. A spirit of great love and concord animated them all. They continued their attendance daily on the ordinary temple services, and seem to have differed little from their Jewish brethren, save in the one point of the love feast.* Indeed the popular feeling ran strong in their favour, and the singleness of aim and glad exuberance of soul which characterised them, served much to recommend them to the unbelieving multitude. One other feature is too remarkable to be passed unnoticed. We are distinctly told that they had all things common. This community of goods seems to have sprung up naturally, and, in all probability, owed its origin to the example of Jesus and the twelve. Those who possessed land or other property sold their possessions, and brought the price and laid it at the apostles' feet. From the common fund thus created, distribution was made to each according to his necessities. For some time the oversight of this distribution was undertaken by the apostles themselves (Acts vi. 2). It has to be noticed, in regard to this matter, that no compulsion was used. The disposal of property was an entirely voluntary act; and even when it was sold, the price, either in whole or in part, might be retained by the owner (Acts v. 4). This state of matters does not seem to have continued in the Church of Jerusalem, nor do we find the example followed by other Churches. Probably it is to this disposal of their property that we are to trace the poverty of the Church in Jerusalem, and the frequent collections which were made for its members (Acts xi. 29; xxiv. 17, in connection with 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3).

Scarcely had the infant Church time to breathe after the fierce onset from without, when she was called upon to grapple

* "The breaking of bread" need not refer exclusively to the Lord's supper. The supper, at this time, seems always to have been accompanied with a feast.

with dangers from within. One would have imagined that there was little risk of any one joining the society of the Christians from any but genuine motives. Their worldly position would not seem to have been such as to attract false professors. No doubt they stood well with the common people, but the great bulk of the higher and educated classes was arrayed against them. And yet, the leaven of hypocrisy, and that too in a very gross and obnoxious form, speedily made its appearance. Joses, a Levite of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and gave the price to the apostles. He seems to have speedily obtained an influential position in the Church ; a position due, not to his wealth, but to his high character, as we may gather from the surname bestowed upon him—Barnabas, son of consolation.* Anxious to obtain a like position, Ananias and Sapphira sold their possessions, but agreed to give only a portion of the price to the Church. As has been already remarked, they were quite at liberty to do this, but the matter assumed a very different aspect when they represented that they had given the whole. The very existence of the Church, at this time, was bound up with the maintenance of purity. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit enabled Peter at once to detect the lie, and to inflict on both such punishment as might prevent the spread of the evil, and act as a warning in all time coming. Both Ananias and his wife were struck dead ; and that this was supernatural is evident from the statement of Peter to Sapphira : “Behold, the feet of them who have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.”

The effects of this visitation were salutary. Great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things. It was seen that God had given the apostles special and miraculous gifts ; for, in addition to this miracle of judgment, many signs and wonders were done by them among the people. The knowledge that they possessed these powers tended both to exalt the estimation in which they were held by the people, and to prevent any of

* How descriptive of his character this name was, we may learn from what is recorded of him in Acts xi. 22-24.

11. Case of
Ananias and
Sapphira.

12. Salutary
effects of this
judgment.

the converts from attempting “to join himself to them.” These and similar expressions would seem to indicate that the apostles had a special place assigned to themselves in the common meeting-room. But while the death of these two persons had the salutary effects mentioned, it did not arrest the work of conversion. On the contrary, as it has ever been, in direct proportion as the Church upheld her purity, and with strong hand drove out from her bosom all elements of sin, so she prospered. Believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women. This time of outward prosperity was not long to continue. History ever repeats itself, and in the simple narrative of Luke we have the course of the Church’s history in all ages distinctly foreshadowed. A time of unwonted prosperity is generally God’s preparation for a time of sifting and trial. So it was here. Special miracles were wrought. Sick people were laid in the streets that Peter’s shadow might overshadow some of them.* Nor was the work confined to Jerusalem. People flocked in from all the surrounding villages to share in the blessings with which God was again visiting his people: “There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one.”

This remarkable success roused the indignation of the rulers.

13. *Arrest of the twelve.* The high priest and his friends, feeling that either the preachers must be put down, or their own influence with the people would be at an end, apprehended the twelve, and put them in the common prison. On the previous occasion, they arrested simply Peter and John, and put them in *ward* † for the night. Matters were more urgent now, and stronger measures must be adopted, and so the whole company of the apostles was seized. This must have been to them a sore discouragement. They may well have begun to question the truth of Christ’s words, “Lo,

* Compare the miracles wrought by Paul in Ephesus, Acts xix. 11, 12.

† Τηρητής is the word used both for “ward” and “prison,” but the addition of “common” in this place would seem to indicate that Peter and John had not been put in the common prison, but confined probably in some apartment attached to the temple.

I am with you alway ;" and to doubt whether, after all, they might not be in error, seeing that the regularly constituted ecclesiastical authorities were so determined in their opposition. But whatever doubts or fears may have assailed them, they were soon dispelled. Their Master's eye was upon them, and He taught them, in a way not to be mistaken, that their conduct had his approval. In the night, an angel opened the prison doors, and commanded them to go into the temple and teach the people "all the words of this life."* Without hesitation they obeyed this heaven-sent command. In the morning, when the Sanhedrim met, officers were sent to fetch the prisoners. On reaching the prison, they found the sentinels standing before the doors, which were securely shut ; but, on opening, they found no man within. They immediately returned, and reported to the Sanhedrim the state of matters. The party of the high priest was confounded. This was a thing utterly beyond their comprehension, and what the issue of such things might be, they could not divine. In the midst of their perplexity, intelligence was brought that the men whom they were seeking were in the temple, busily engaged in teaching the people. The captain of the temple and the officers were at once ordered to bring them, but to use no violence in doing so, lest they should excite the people, who at this time were so strongly in favour of the apostles, that they would not have hesitated to stone any one who should attempt to injure them.

On reaching the Sanhedrim, the apostles were forthwith arraigned before the council. The charge against them was not simply that they had taught in the name of Jesus, but that they had done this in defiance of the interdict previously laid upon them. The Sanhedrim were very shy of mentioning the name of Jesus. They alluded to him by such expressions as, "this name," and "this man," and could not brook the idea that a number of ignorant and unlearned men should have the boldness to fasten on them the guilt of murder, forgetful of the cry which they hissed in

* It is interesting to observe that we have no example in the Acts of the Apostles of God's interposing directly for the Church except in cases of emergency. (See Acts x. 3; xii. 7; xvi. 9; xviii. 9; xxiii. 11; xxvii. 23.)

Pilate's face: "His blood be on us, and on our children." Peter answered for his fellow-apostles and himself. His answer was clear and to the point: God must be obeyed rather than man. He hath raised up Jesus, whom ye crucified, and hath exalted him to his own right hand in the heavens as a Prince and a Saviour, for the express purpose of giving to Israel repentance and remission of sins. We have been appointed to witness these things to the people. In this work we have the aid of the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given, not to us only, but to all who obey him." These were bold words, and it was becoming clear that half measures would not suffice. The Sanhedrim, wounded to the quick, and that too in the tenderest point, consulted whether it were not advisable to put the men to death. From what we know of the high priest, we may be sure he would not have scrupled to adopt this measure. But God causeth the wrath of man to praise him, and he uses the petty jealousies and rivalries of sects and councils as a means of working out his purposes.

The Sanhedrim was not wholly composed of Sadducees.

15. *Advice of Gamaliel.* A considerable portion of its members was Pharisees. Between these two parties there existed a long-standing and an ever-increasing enmity—an enmity arising from their widely different views on certain doctrinal points, and which was ever ready to break out into open violence when opportunity offered. This enmity God employed on the present occasion to save the lives of his servants, as Paul afterwards employed it to the confusion of the council itself, and his own deliverance from their immediate power (Acts xxiii. 6-10). While the Sadducees were thus menacing death to the twelve, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, a doctor of the law, and a man who was held in the highest esteem and honour by the great body of the people, rose, and, after ordering the prisoners to be removed, addressed the assembly. He cautioned them to beware of what they intended to do to these men. For, if the work in which they were engaged were of God, it would be in vain for them to oppose it; for, in that case, they would be opposing God himself. But if it were of

men, history and experience alike taught them that it would soon pass away and come to nought. He illustrated this view of the case by a reference to Theudas, who, giving himself out to be some great one, drew after him some four hundred men, all of whom, along with their leader, perished ; and to Judas, who met with the same fate in somewhat similar circumstances.* His advice, accordingly, was, that they should leave the men alone, and time would speedily settle the question. Convinced by this reasoning, or satisfied that a sentence of death would not be carried, the Sadducees contented themselves with scourging the apostles—a step to which Gamaliel and his friends seem to have taken no objection. They repeated the injunction given to Peter and John on a previous occasion, and interdicted them from teaching the people. So far from damping their ardour, this treatment only served to inflame it all the more. They left the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ, and ceased not, whenever and wherever they had opportunity, to preach that Jesus was the Christ.

The Church ever oscillates between two opposite but hostile forces—persecution from without and dissension from within. The early Church was no exception to this law. The number of disciples rapidly increased, and this brought with it an increase of difficulty in duly distributing the daily allowance from the common fund. The apostles seem to have attended to this duty for some time, but, as believers were multiplied, they were fully engrossed in preaching the word. In these circumstances, they were probably compelled to hand over to assistants the charge of the daily ministration. Be this as it may, murmurs began to arise against the mode of distribution, and it was asserted by the Grecians,† and probably

* Josephus speaks of a Theudas who flourished at least twelve years after this. Those who oppose the truth assume that there was only one Theudas, and this the one mentioned by Josephus, and so attempt to convict Luke of inaccuracy, or something worse. It need not be said that for aught we know there may have been many of this name, and that Luke is as much worthy of credit as Josephus, whose history is full of inaccuracies.

† Ἑλλήνισται, Grecians (to be carefully distinguished from Ἑλληνες, Greeks), were Grecian Jews; not only those who were themselves proselytes, nor only those who came of families once proselytised, but all who, on account of origin or habitation, spake Greek as their ordinary language, and used ordinarily the Septuagint

with truth, that their widows were neglected by the Hebrews, in whose hands the common property of the Church was vested. The apostles having summoned a meeting of all the Christians in Jerusalem, stated that they could no longer undertake the labour of superintending the distribution, inasmuch as their great work was to preach the word. In these circumstances, they advised that seven men should be chosen, who should be specially intrusted with this duty. The matter was left entirely in the hands of the Church, save only that the apostles, in virtue of their position, gave directions as to the character of the men to be selected. They were to be of honest report, so that no breath of suspicion might attach to their dealings; full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, so as to discharge their difficult and delicate duties in a way that would secure the approbation of the Church, and the comfort, both spiritual and temporal, of the recipients.* The proposal met with the hearty approval of the Church, and they made choice of Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch,† and brought them to the apostles, who ordained them by prayer and the imposition of hands. It may be noticed that the names of all the seven are Greek, although it does not necessarily follow from this that they were all Grecians; for the names of some of the twelve were Greek, and yet it is undoubted that they themselves were all Hebrews. The settlement, on so simple and amicable a basis, of this first division in the Church, bore good fruit. As has been already observed, the Church progresses in proportion as she retains her purity, and maintains the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The word of God, we are told, increased, and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great company of the priests was obedient to the faith.

version. The Hebrews were the pure Jews, not necessarily resident in Palestine (for example, Paul, a native of Tarsus, was an Hebrew of the Hebrews), nor necessarily of unmixed Jewish descent, but rather distinguished by language, as speaking the Syro-Chaldaic, and using the Hebrew Scriptures."—*Alford.*

* Compare with these instructions those of Paul in 1 Tim. iii. 8-13.

† Some have supposed, but without any just ground, that this Nicolas was the founder of the Nicolaitanes mentioned in Rev. ii. 6. In the expression "proselyte of Antioch," there may be a trace of the autoptic style of Luke, who is generally supposed to have been a native of Antioch.

Up to the point at which we have arrived, the gospel has been making almost uninterrupted progress. The people regard it with evident favour. Many even of the priests become converts. No doubt it has been bitterly opposed by the Sadducees; but their influence, however great among the upper classes, does not much affect the great bulk of the people. Christianity has not yet come into direct collision with Pharisaism. Indeed the Pharisees have exhibited a certain leaning in its favour; but this has arisen, not from any liking to the distinctive principles of Christianity on their part, but because the grand central truth of the gospel, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus—so constantly insisted on by the apostles—coincided with their own opinions, and was diametrically opposed to those of the Sadducees. But the time has now arrived when these two hostile and utterly diverse systems shall come into contact; and the contact brings out very clearly that the Pharisees, no less than the Sadducees, are ready to join in the work of persecution, so soon as it is seen that the preaching of the Cross runs counter to their cherished notions and their proud exclusiveness. This opposition, which God overruled for the spread of the truth, was brought prominently out by the preaching of Stephen, one of the seven. He was a man full of faith and power, and gifted with rare wisdom and remarkable skill in debate. In his discussions with his countrymen, he had evidently dwelt upon the inefficacy of the law as a means of justification, and had enlarged on the spiritual nature of acceptable service, probably recalling the remarkable words of Christ recorded in John iv. 21-23. He may even have gone the length of announcing that Christ was the end of the law, and may have dimly foreshadowed those glorious truths which St. Paul was afterwards more fully and clearly to expound.

Stephen was violently opposed by members of various synagogues—of the Libertines,* of the Cyrenians, of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia. We may well believe that one of his most eager and

18. Arrest and trial of Stephen.

* Libertines, not inhabitants of a town called *Libertina*, but the descendants of Jewish freedmen at Rome, who had been expelled by Tiberius.

determined opponents was a young man from Tarsus in Cilicia—that same Saul who was one day to have brought against himself (Acts xxi. 28) the very charges which he was now bringing forward against Stephen. Unable to meet Stephen in argument, or to resist the wisdom and spirit with which he spake, they perverted his language, and represented him to the people as a blasphemer against Moses and against God. These enemies of the truth knew well the temper of the Jewish people, and that nothing would excite them more against Christianity than the belief that it was to supersede their much-loved Judaism. Acting on this knowledge, they suborned false witnesses, who, scattered among the people, misrepresented the whole drift of Stephen's teaching ; and, by taking what perhaps he did actually say out of its context,* made it appear that he was inculcating apostasy from Moses and those hallowed and time-honoured institutions which had come down from their fathers. The conviction thus forced home on the minds of the people by unprincipled opponents of the truth, that, if Christianity was to triumph, it could only be on the ruins of Judaism, produced that remarkable change in popular feeling towards the Church which we observe at this point in the narrative. Union between these two systems was impossible, and henceforward they went on separate paths—Judaism must decrease, but Christianity must increase. The people being, by the means described, thoroughly aroused, and there being no longer any danger of their taking part with the Church, Stephen was at once arrested, and dragged before the Sanhedrim. The charge laid against him was that of blasphemy ; in particular, that he said that Jesus of Nazareth should destroy the temple, and change the customs which Moses had delivered. Stephen was not left to himself on this occasion. God not only gave him a mouth and wisdom, but manifested his presence with him in an outer and visible form—all saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.† This miraculous brightness evidently awed the council ; an awe which manifests itself in the

* Alford *in loco*.

† Compare the account given of Moses, when he came down from the mount, Exodus xxiv. 29-35.

extreme gentleness of the high priest's question, "Are these things so?"

Stephen's reply consists in the main of a hurried resumé of Jewish history from Abraham's time to that of Solomon. In giving this summary he shows:—

19. Stephen's
defence.

First, His own intimate acquaintance with the history of his nation, and his great reverence for all Jewish institutes as God-given: from which his hearers might infer that he was not likely to speak slightingly of Moses, the great founder of these institutes; nor of the temple, which might be regarded as the very centre and keystone of Judaism.

Second, That even in Judaism there had been a gradual development from rude and imperfectly organised forms of worship to a more perfect system:—that the patriarchal dispensation, with its few simple rites, and its union of priestly and princely duties, had given place to the more elaborate Mosaic, with its more fully equipped but still temporary and shadowy tabernacle—the prophet of this dispensation, even when laying down the laws for its guidance, had himself been conscious of its imperfection, and had pointed his countrymen to a greater prophet to come;—that the Mosaic, with its temporary and movable tabernacle, had given place to the Mosaic, as reorganised by David, with the solid and apparently enduring temple. But even under a dispensation which might thus appear destined to continue, we find God declaring that "heaven was his throne, and *earth his footstool*;" clearly indicating that mere temple service was not acceptable to him. Seeing that there had been thus a gradual development, there was at least a probability that Judaism itself might give place to something better and more spiritual; and he could not be justly charged with blasphemy in maintaining that the time was coming when the true worshippers should worship God in the Spirit and in truth.

Third, That, so far from opposing and resisting the Holy Ghost in preaching Christ, he was only making known to them the very Prophet whom Moses had foretold; while they, in rejecting his testimony, were treading in the footsteps of their fathers, whose whole history had been one continued act of

rebellion against God and opposition to his Spirit ; as was abundantly manifested in the case of Joseph (Acts vii. 9), in their rejection of Moses (Acts vii. 23-28), and in their idolatry at Sinai and throughout the wilderness (Acts vii. 39-43) ;—a rebellion and an opposition which had reached their climax in the murder of the Lord of Glory—the thought of which transcendent crime leads him to burst out in the impassioned language, “ Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One ; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers : who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.” *

* This speech of Stephen has caused considerable difficulty, inasmuch as several of its statements seem to run counter to other portions of Holy Writ. It may be impossible now to reconcile these discrepancies ; and, indeed, it is questionable whether there is any necessity to make the attempt. Luke, in reporting this speech, is not responsible for the strict historical accuracy of every statement ; he is responsible only for the correctness with which he reports what Stephen actually uttered. To any candid mind, these discrepancies will tell strongly in favour of the genuineness of the address. We may point out one or two of these discrepancies :—

1. Stephen says that God removed Abraham into Canaan after his father's death. In Gen. xi. 26, we read that Terah was seventy years old when Abraham was born ; and in Gen. xii. 4, that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he left Haran for Canaan. This would make Terah only one hundred and forty-five years of age at that time ; but he was two hundred and five when he died (Gen. xi. 32). Either Abraham was not born until Terah was one hundred and thirty years of age, or Terah lived in Haran sixty years after Abraham left it.

2. Again, Stephen states that the oppression in Egypt lasted four hundred years. The same number is used in Gen. xv. 13. The actual time was four hundred and thirty years, as we learn from Exod. xii. 40. See also Gal. iii. 17.

3. Stephen says, “ Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.” In Gen. xlvi. 27, Exod. i. 5, and in Deut. x. 22, the number is stated to be only seventy. It is supposed that Joseph's grandchildren, five in number, are to be reckoned, so as to make up the seventy-five (1 Chron. vii. 14-21).

4. Stephen says that Jacob was buried in Sychem ; but from Gen. l. 13, we know that he was buried in Machpelah.

5. Stephen states that Abraham purchased a burial place in Sychem of the sons of Emmor. From Gen. xxxiii. 18-20, we learn that it was Jacob who purchased the field of Sychem ; and from Gen. xxiii., that Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah.

From the fact that Stephen alludes to incidents not recorded in Scripture (Acts vii. 16, 22, and the division of Moses' life into three periods of forty years each, only mentioned here), it is altogether likely that he was speaking according to traditions current among the people, and believed by them to be true ; which, probably, in their main outlines, they were.

These bold words had the effect of rousing the Sanhedrim to madness: "They were cut to the heart, and gnashed upon him with their teeth." Stephen, ^{20. Martyrdom of Stephen.} undismayed, and full of simple faith in his risen Lord, turned from the raging sea of angry human faces, and directed his gaze towards heaven. There he beheld a sight which gave him courage in this hour of trial, and made him bold to resist all the power of his adversaries. He saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. On mentioning what he saw, the fury of his adversaries passed all bounds. They were horror-struck at what they regarded as blasphemy of the blackest character. They gave expression to their excited feelings in a loud cry; and to evidence their detestation of the sentiments to which they had been compelled to listen, they now stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord. The object of his enemies was now attained. The mob is against Christianity, and persecution may be safely let loose. Stephen was dragged out of the city, and there stoned. He had drunk deeply of his Master's spirit, and his last moments were spent in praying for his murderers—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" and having said this, he fell on sleep, the first of that glorious company of martyrs, whose names are the inheritance of the Church, and whose blood has been its seed throughout all its history. The conduct of the Sanhedrim on this occasion did not meet with universal approbation. There were devout men among the people who were grieved at this ebullition of popular feeling, and who manifested their sorrow by making great lamentation over Stephen, and giving him a decent burial: "And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." *

* Luke never uses the word *εὐλαβῆς* (devout) as descriptive of Christians. It occurs in the following places, in all of which it is used of Jews:—Luke ii. 25; Acts ii. 5; viii. 2. Paul uses it (Acts xxii. 12; but *εὐσεβῆς* is also read in this verse) of Ananias, who was a Christian. But he was speaking of Ananias as a Jew. It is thus exceedingly likely that those who buried Stephen were pious Jews, and not Christians.

CHAPTER II.

SPREAD OF THE CHURCH IN PALESTINE—
CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Acts viii.—ix. 31. A.D. 36, 37.

We have traced to its source that change in popular feeling which resulted in the death of Stephen. The 21. *Persecution* —*spread of the* Sanhedrim were not slow to follow up the *word*. advantage which they had gained. The Christians in Jerusalem were subjected to a persecution so severe that all save the apostles were driven from the capital. The principal agent in this work was a young man named Saul. He consented to Stephen's death, but does not seem to have taken part in the actual stoning (Acts xxii. 20). But, thinking with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth (Act xxvi. 9), and persuaded that in so acting he was doing God service, he put himself at the head of the persecutors, and soon excelled them all in the eagerness with which he sought to put down what appeared to him a pestilent heresy. He commenced a house to house visitation (Acts viii. 3), compelled all who were suspected of being Christians to blaspheme the name of Jesus (Acts xxvi. 11), and, on their refusal, dragged them from their homes and committed them to prison. He punished them oft in every synagogue, and was the principal witness against those of them who were formally tried and put to death (Acts xxvi. 10). Nor did he confine his ravages to Jerusalem. Being exceedingly mad against them, and breathing out threatenings and slaughter, he persecuted them even unto strange cities (Acts xxvi. 11). Neither age nor sect was spared by this ruthless

opponent of the truth. Both men and women experienced the tender mercies of this blasphemer and persecutor (1 Tim. i. 13). In so far as the enmity of man could accomplish it, the destruction of the Church seemed inevitable. The smoking flax seemed doomed to be quenched; but the very means taken to quench it only caused it to blaze out afresh, and with renewed life and vigour. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. God causeth the wrath of man to praise him. So it was, evidently, in the case before us. The apostles seem to have imagined that Jerusalem was to be the great field of their labours. They had forgotten the words of the Lord, how he had said: "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Instead of obeying this command, they had hitherto confined themselves exclusively to the capital, and had made no effort to proclaim Christ outside its walls. But God took the matter into his own hands, and by persecution accomplished his own designs. They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Thus the blow that was intended to destroy the Church had the effect of extending it throughout the region of Judea and Samaria, and even as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch (Acts xi. 19). So often as the Church declines to do a plainly commanded duty, God will take his own way of having that duty performed. If the still small voice is unheeded, he will send the hurricane and the thunder, and these will compel a hearing.

Among those whom persecution drove from Jerusalem was Philip the deacon, one of the seven (Acts vi. 5). 22. *The gospel preached in Samaria.* He went to a city of Samaria,* and there preached Christ with such effect that multitudes became converts to his doctrines. Various miracles were performed, unclean spirits were cast out, paralytics were healed, and there was great joy in the city. The inhabitants, who would appear to have been of a credulous disposition, had, for a considerable time prior to Philip's arrival, been the dupes of

* Probably Sychem or Sychar (John iv. 5); and if so, the narrative in John's Gospel will explain the ready reception which Philip's preaching met with.

a sorcerer named Simon, who, by the practice of magical arts, had contrived to obtain great influence over them. So great, indeed, had his influence been, that the people seem to have regarded him as the promised Deliverer of the nation ; a belief which they embodied in the appellation given him—"The Great Power of God." Philip's preaching and its results had the effect of disturbing the power of Simon. He saw his followers going over to what he evidently considered a mere rival preacher, and satisfied in his own mind, from the miracles wrought by Philip, that he was in league with some powerful spirit, and hoping that, in some way or other, he might be enabled to share in this power, he deemed it advisable to attach himself to the Christian evangelist. He professed his faith in Christ, and, on this profession, received the sign of baptism. Intelligence of the wonderful doings in the region of Samaria soon reached Jerusalem. The Church there had scarcely anticipated what had occurred. The strong Jewish element in the Church of Jerusalem rendered it difficult of belief that gospel blessings were intended for outcasts, such as the Samaritans were regarded to be (John iv. 9 ; viii. 48). Christ's words (Acts i. 8) were specific enough, but, up to this time, they had received little consideration. Now, however, they acquire a distinct meaning. The course of events clears up much that had been hitherto imperfectly understood. And so, on hearing that Samaria had received the word, the apostles sent forth Peter and John to watch over and direct the good work. On their arrival, they at once recognised the genuineness of the work, which was still further attested by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost* after prayer and the laying on of the apostles' hands. Though not specifically mentioned, it is evident from the narrative that the descent of the Holy Ghost

* Acts viii. 16, need cause no difficulty. It is said in verse 12 that the people believed and were baptised. Faith is the Spirit's work, but, apparently, from verse 16, they did not receive the Spirit until the arrival of Peter and John. The whole difficulty is removed by remembering that verse 16 refers, not to the ordinary, but the extraordinary working of the Spirit. The Spirit wrought faith in them, as he does in the Church now, so that they believed Philip's message; but the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were confined to the apostolic age, were not given until the coming down of Peter and John.

was accompanied, as at Pentecost, with the miraculous gift of tongues. Simon had been astonished by the miracles wrought by Philip; he was more astonished now when he beheld the wonderful effects which flowed from the imposition of the apostles' hands. He connected rightly enough the bestowal of the gift of tongues with the outward action of the apostles, and imagined that they not only possessed this power themselves, but could confer it on others. In the possession of this power, he saw the means of regaining his former influence, and of fighting the Christians with their own weapons. Measuring the apostles by his own standard, and believing firmly that "gain is godliness," he offered to purchase from them the power of bestowing on others the Holy Ghost, little doubting that the apostles would gladly close with his offer. Peter, now detecting the hitherto concealed character of the mock professor, rebuked him in a strain of the utmost sternness and solemnity, declaring that his conduct made it manifest that he had neither part nor lot in this matter, and urging him to pray God, if perhaps his sin might be forgiven. Simon, awed by this solemn denunciation, entreated Peter to pray for him, but, in the very act of doing so, manifested an entire absence of the spirit of true repentance. He did not seek repentance, but escape from Peter's threatenings; and his subsequent history, though somewhat traditional, shows that he did not profit by Peter's warning. The two apostles, "having testified and preached the word of the Lord," visited many villages of the Samaritans, and so returned to Jerusalem.

Shortly after the departure of Peter and John from Samaria, Philip was directed by an angel to proceed southward in the direction of Gaza. His orders were specific as to locality—he was told to take the road which was desert;* but he received no information regarding the object of this mission. Philip at once obeyed the heavenly message, and was not left long in ignorance of God's

23. *Conversion
of the Ethiopian
eunuch.*

* This seems the simplest and most natural application of the word "desert," especially as we know there were two roads from Jerusalem to Gaza.

purpose in sending him. One of the annual Jewish feasts had just terminated. Strangers from all quarters flocked to Jerusalem on these occasions, and among others who had journeyed far to worship the God of Israel, was a eunuch from Ethiopia, who held a post of great influence under Candace, queen of that country. We are not informed whether he was a Jew by birth, or one of those proselytes that were so numerous at that time. Be this as it may, he was evidently a man of deep piety, as we may gather both from the journey he undertook, and from his occupation when he first comes before us. He was returning from Jerusalem, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Admonished by the Spirit, Philip joined himself to the chariot; and having learned the passage the eunuch was reading, asked him if he understood its import. This the eunuch did not. The passage was that striking and remarkable prophecy of Christ's sufferings and death contained in the 53rd chapter of Isaiah; and nothing could more clearly indicate how little even pious Israelites understood such prophecies than the eunuch's question to Philip: "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" Philip, who had taken his seat beside the eunuch, unfolded to him the true meaning and application of Isaiah's words, as finding their complete fulfilment in Jesus. As they proceeded on their way, they came to a certain water, and the eunuch proposed that he should receive at Philip's hands the rite of baptism. On his professing his firm belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, the ordinance was administered to him; immediately on which Philip was caught away by the Spirit, and the eunuch saw him no more. He went, however, on his way rejoicing, and is a signal example of the truth of Christ's words: "He that seeketh findeth." Although his name never meets us again in this or in any other history, we may well believe that he was the means of introducing the gospel into Ethiopia, and of founding the Church which still, amid many corruptions, exists in that region. Philip was carried by the Spirit to Azotus, and directing his steps northward, he preached in all the cities until he came to Cæsarea, where he settled, and where we find him long

afterwards the pastor of the Christian congregation in that important city (Acts xxi. 8).

While the persecution which arose about Stephen was still raging, an event happened which, in the providence of God, was destined to exert a world-wide influence on Christianity. This was the conversion of Saul, who, as we have already seen, was the leading spirit in the work of persecution. As his life and work occupy such a prominent place in the Acts, it may be advantageous to state briefly what is known of him up to the period at which we have now arrived. Saul was a native of Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, which, in his own words, was no mean city. He inherited from his father the privileges of Roman citizenship (Acts xvi. 37 ; xxii. 25-28). As was the custom among his countrymen, he was taught a trade—that of tent-making (Acts xviii. 3). His early education had been obtained in Jerusalem, where he studied under Gamaliel, and where he was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers (Acts xxii. 3), and profited in the Jews' religion above many his equals in his own nation, being exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers (Gal. i. 14). He belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, and was one of the strictest of that strict party (Acts xxvi. 5). We have no mention of him in the sacred history until he is introduced to us as the “young man Saul,” at whose feet the witnesses against Stephen laid down their clothes. But even already he was a man of mark in his party. Young, energetic, a man of prompt decision and of strong religious convictions, he threw himself into the contest with Christianity with all his heart and soul. Regarding it as a pestilent heresy, that aimed at the overthrow of the hallowed, and time-honoured, and withal God-given religion of his forefathers, he resolved, in so far as he was concerned, to put forth all his might in compassing its utter extermination. We have already seen the measures he adopted for effecting this purpose. They were sharp and decisive, and thoroughly accordant to the character of the man. It was while engaged in this work of persecution that the event happened which turned his whole world upside down, and gave a new

*24. Conversion
of Saul.*

direction to the marvellous energies with which he was endowed. Having satiated his vengeance on the Christians in Jerusalem, and learning that in far distant cities the heresy against which he was so zealously contending was making its appearance, he resolved to leave its suppression in Judea to the willing hands always to be found there, and to proceed as far as to Damascus, to quench the flame that was beginning to burn in that city. Armed with letters from the high priest, as representing the Jewish Sanhedrim (Acts ix. 2, compared with xxii. 5), he set out with the full intent of bringing bound to Jerusalem any whom he found professing the faith of Christ. As he went on his journey, and had now drawn near to Damascus, about mid-day, there shone round about him a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun. Saul was struck to the earth, and heard a voice addressing him by name in the Hebrew tongue.* It was the risen and glorified Jesus who thus appeared to him, and whom the apostle now saw for the first time (1 Cor. xv. 8). In answer to the terrified question of the astonished and trembling persecutor, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Jesus told him to arise and go into the city, and it should be told him what he must do.† His companions, during this interview, stood speechless,‡ hearing a voice§ but seeing no man.¶ The glory of

* A striking trace of this is found in the form of the name used in the original: it is the Hebrew form "Saoul."

† From Acts xxvi. 15-18, it would seem as if the commission to the apostle was given while he lay on the ground, no mention being made of Ananias. It has to be borne in mind, that in the address before Agrippa the apostle had no occasion to enter into minute particulars regarding his conversion, his object being to convince Agrippa that in acting as he was then doing, he was obeying the voice of God. In these circumstances, it was not necessary to state how he received his commission, but simply that he had received it. The commission came through Ananias, but from Jesus. *Qui per alterum facit per se facit.*

‡ In Acts xxvi. 14 we read, "And when we were all fallen to the earth." The discrepancy between the two accounts has never been satisfactorily explained. It has been suggested that, although all fell to the earth, Saul alone continued any length of time in that condition, the others immediately rising, and remaining standing during the interview.

§ In Acts xxii. 9 it is said, "They that were with me . . . heard not the voice of him that spake to me." The explanation is easy. They heard the sound of the voice, but could not distinguish the articulate words. Compare John xii. 28, 29. Probably his companions were Grecians, and so did not understand the Hebrew language.

¶ In Acts xxii. 9 it is, "They saw indeed the light." Here there is no discrepancy. His companions simply saw the light, and heard the sound of a voice; Saul alone saw the man—Christ Jesus—and understood his words.

this vision struck Saul blind for a season, and his companions had to lead him by the hand into Damascus. Here he continued three days fasting, and engaged in prayer. At the end of that time the Lord appeared to Ananias, a devout man, and one who had a good report of all the Jews who dwelt in the city (Acts xxii. 12), and told him to proceed to the street called "Straight," and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; who at the same time had, in a vision, seen this same Ananias coming in and putting his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.* Ananias, who was ignorant of the change which had come over Saul, made objections to obeying this command, pleading the well-known character of Saul, and the nature of his errand to Damascus, as his excuse. His objections were speedily overruled, and he was assured that Saul was a chosen vessel unto Jesus, to bear his name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. Without any further hesitation, he at once proceeded to the house of Judas, and laid his hands on Saul, from whose eyes there fell as it had been scales. Ananias at the same time delivered the commission which he had received from Jesus, whereupon Saul was forthwith received into the visible Church by the rite of baptism, administered by Ananias (Acts xxii. 16). Immediately on his conversion, Paul conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. i. 16), but straightway preached Christ in the synagogues of Damascus, to the astonishment of all who heard him, and confounded the Jews dwelling there, proving that Jesus was very Christ.

How long Paul remained in Damascus on this occasion we have no means of ascertaining. His stay was probably short—at least we might infer as much from his own statement in the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. i. 17). From this epistle we learn that, shortly after his conversion, he proceeded to Arabia, and continued there for some considerable time. We have no definite information as to the nature of his employment when there: it has been deemed highly probable that he received during this period of retirement

* For a very parallel case, compare the appearance of the angel to Cornelius, and the vision to Peter, as recorded in the 10th chapter of the Acts.

fuller instruction from God in the principles and doctrines of the gospel, and had those visions and revelations which he describes in 2 Cor. xii. But, whether he was actively engaged in evangelistic work, or taken aside in order to his more perfect equipment for the great work he had to do, it was of importance to the cause of Christianity, especially among the Gentiles, that he could assure his converts that he received his gospel, not from men, not even from the apostles of our Lord, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 12). When the Judaising Christians endeavoured, as in Galatia, to overturn the apostle's work, their favourite device was to throw discredit upon his apostolic authority, and hence to conclude that if in any point his teaching was not in accordance with that of the original twelve, the Church was bound to reject it as unworthy of reception. This visit to Arabia supplied the apostle with an argument which he wielded with great effect against all such opponents, and enabled him satisfactorily to demonstrate that he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5). At the termination of this visit he returned again to Damascus (Gal. i. 17), where his preaching had the effect of stirring up the deep enmity of the Jews, who, unable to resist his wisdom and eloquence, took counsel to kill him. The city was at that time in the possession of Aretas, king of Arabia (2 Cor. xi. 32), and the governor, stirred up by the Jews, kept a watch day and night at the gates for the purpose of apprehending Paul. His design was in some way communicated to the Christians, who let the apostle down by the wall in a basket; and then, three years* after his conversion (Gal. i. 18), he returned to Jerusalem.

On his arrival in the capital, he at once proceeded to join himself to the Christians; but they were all afraid *26. Paul visits Jerusalem.* of him, and seem to have regarded him as a spy. In these circumstances, he was indebted for an introduction to Barnabas, who declared to the Church how he had seen the

* In Acts the expression is, "many days." For a very parallel expression, see 1 Kings ii. 38, where the words "many days" are in the very next verse stated to have been "three years."

Lord on the way to Damascus, and that he had already proved the genuineness of his conversion by preaching boldly in the name of Jesus. His stay in Jerusalem was limited to fifteen days, and had for its special object a conference with Peter (Gal. i. 18). We are not told what the subject of this conference was, but that it related to his mission to the Gentiles there can be little doubt. In Jerusalem he boldly proclaimed the change he had undergone, by preaching the Lord Jesus and by disputing against the Grecians, who, as we have seen, were probably his associates in former days. The loss of such a man as Paul was, at the present moment, a sore discouragement to this active but unscrupulous party, and they exhibited their resentment by seeking to compass his death. His friends, becoming aware of this, deemed it prudent to send him away from Jerusalem ; and a vision which he himself had while praying in the temple, left him no alternative but to depart, much as he desired to labour for Christ among his own countrymen in their own land (Acts xxii. 17-21).* Leaving Jerusalem, he proceeded to Cæsarea, and came afterwards into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. i. 21), and so to Tarsus, where he remained until Barnabas summoned him to Antioch (Acts xi. 25), to assist in the great work of God which, commencing in that city, spread rapidly through the Roman empire. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Such are the simple yet graphic words with which the sacred historian closes this portion of his narrative. A wider field is opening out before him.

* Luke makes no mention of this vision in the Acts, and assigns the intention to kill him as the reason of his departure. Both causes co-operated. Compare, for a similar case, Acts xv. 2 with Gal. ii. 2. He is sent to Jerusalem by the Church, and yet he goes "by revelation."

CHAPTER III.

ADMISSION OF GENTILES TO THE CHURCH—
DEATH OF JAMES.

ACTS ix. 32—xii. A.D. 37-44.

WE now enter a very important part of the history. Hitherto *27. Importance of this event.* the gospel had been preached exclusively to Jews or Jewish proselytes. Even the apostles do not seem to have understood Christ's command to preach the gospel to every creature as implying that the Gentiles, as such, were to be admitted into the Christian Church. They looked upon Christianity through Judaism, and regarded it as designed exclusively for those who, by circumcision, put themselves within the pale of the Abrahamic covenant. Stephen appears to have caught a glimpse of the great truth, which Paul laboured all his life to inculcate, and in behalf of which he suffered many and bitter persecutions, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love." But the Church in Jerusalem was slow to accept this truth; nay, it never heartily accepted it, and so, when Jerusalem fell and the Jews ceased to have a national existence, Jewish Christianity degenerated into sectarianism, and soon ceased to exist. We need not feel surprise at this slowness of the Church to rise to the full dignity of its position. Judaism was entwined about their very inmost being with so many hallowed associations and glorious memories of the past, and it contained so many prophetic utterances of an apparently still more glorious future, that we need not wonder that a man so entirely Jewish as Peter should have been slow to believe

that the poorest outcast, in the highways of the Gentile world, was as welcome into the kingdom of God as the most punctilious Jew. But, while thus capable of sympathising with the national weaknesses of the apostles, we cannot fail to see that, had their views been carried out, had Christianity become a mere Jewish institute, it would have speedily dwindled and died. The swaddling bands of Judaism would have speedily choked its young life out. Hence we find God himself taking the matter in hand, and leaving the Church no choice but to obey his command. And his way, in this matter, was so clear, that nothing but blinded prejudice could have misunderstood it. We shall now endeavour to show how God guided his Church in this interesting crisis of her history.

The instrument chosen to open the door of faith to the Gentiles was Peter. He had left Jerusalem, probably some time during the three years covered by Paul's stay in Arabia, and gone on a missionary tour throughout Judea. He visited Lydda, and was the means of restoring Eneas to health, who had been bedridden with palsy for eight years. The fame of the miracle spread through all the vale of Sharon, and many turned to the Lord.* Not far from Lydda lay the ancient seaport of Joppa, where a Christian Church had been gathered, and where we find the earliest trace of the institution of widows (Acts ix. 39), so fully described in Paul's letters to Timothy (1 Tim. v.). They seem, at this time, to have constituted a society, which busied itself in the making of "coats and garments," probably for distribution among the poor. One of these, called Tabitha, had pre-eminently distinguished herself by her zeal in this and many other good works; and her death, which happened during Peter's visit to Lydda, was a sore blow to the Church. Hearing of Peter's proximity, and, in all likelihood, of the miracle wrought on Eneas, the disciples in Joppa sent him messengers, requesting him to come to them with all convenient speed. Peter at once complied with the request, and on his arrival in Joppa was taken to the "upper chamber," where the body lay, and where the widows showed

28. *Peter's tour through Sharon.*

* Compare the miracle recorded Acts xxviii. 8.

him the coats and garments which Tabitha had made while she was with them. Peter, having put them all forth, kneeled down and prayed, and then addressed the dead woman in the simple words, "Tabitha, arise;" when she immediately opened her eyes, and, seeing Peter, sat up.* Such a miracle as this could not but produce a great impression, and we need feel no surprise in being told that, in consequence of it, "many believed in the Lord." Peter continued to reside in Joppa for a considerable time, the guest of one Simon, a tanner, whose house, we are informed, was situated by the seaside.

About thirty miles north of Joppa lay Cæsarea, at this time the political capital of Judea, where the Roman governor permanently resided, and which always contained a considerable number of Roman soldiers. The Romans, from prudential motives, were in the habit of sending the soldiers raised in one province to do service in another; and accordingly we find at this time, in the garrison of Cæsarea, a company that had been levied in Italy, commanded by an officer bearing one of the most celebrated of Roman names. Cornelius, the officer in question, of the rank of a centurion, was a man of deep piety, who, with all his house, had forsaken idolatry, and was a worshipper of the true God. His piety was of a vigorous, healthy type, and had regard both to God and man. He was a man of prayer, and one who did good to all men as he had opportunity. So far as his light enabled him, he served God with all his heart; and he found realised in his own experience the truth of our Lord's pregnant words, "To him that hath, shall be given." While engaged in prayer an angel appeared to him, who directed him to send men to Joppa for one Simon, "whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts xi. 14). He at the same time received particular directions regarding Peter's residence, so as to leave no doubt on his mind concerning the reality of the vision. Cornelius at once obeyed the command of his heavenly visitant, and despatched two of his household servants and a devout soldier to

* Compare the restoration to life of Eutychus, Acts xx. 9-12.

Joppa, in search of Peter. About noon of the following day, as the messengers drew near to Joppa, Peter, all unconscious of what had taken place in Cæsarea, went up upon the house-top to pray. While there he became very hungry, but before the usual mid-day meal was prepared, he fell into a trance. In this state, he saw heaven opened, and a great sheet, supported by four cords, let down from heaven to earth, and containing all manner of four-footed beasts, reptiles, and fowls. At the same time he was commanded, in audible tones, to kill and eat. To this he demurred, pleading as his excuse the well-known Jewish law which forbade the eating of anything unclean. His scruples on this score were overruled by the voice announcing that the law was now abrogated, and that God had abolished the distinction between clean and unclean—a distinction founded not in the reason of things, but created by His sovereign will. The command to kill and eat, the refusal, and the announcement of the abrogation of the law, were repeated three times, so that no doubt might remain as to the mind of God in the matter thus significantly shadowed forth. While Peter was still in doubt regarding the purport of this vision, the messengers from Cornelius had arrived at the tanner's house, and were inquiring for the apostle. To dissipate any reluctance that Peter might have in acceding to their request, the Spirit expressly told him to go with them, nothing doubting, "for I have sent them." No alternative was left the apostle but to obey an order so unequivocally communicated to him. God was leading him in a way which he did not yet fully comprehend, and he was left no choice but to walk in that way. Accordingly, having lodged the messengers for the night, he started in the morning, taking with him six brethren (Acts xi. 12), and arrived in Cæsarea next afternoon about three o'clock. Cornelius, knowing the hour when Peter might be expected, had assembled his kinsmen and near friends, and on Peter's arrival met him at the door, and fell down and worshipped him. Peter immediately took him up, refusing all divine honours, and the two, talking to each other, entered into the house. After stating that, in ordinary

circumstances, it was unlawful for a Jew to hold intercourse with a Gentile, Peter mentioned that by special revelation he had been taught to hold no man common or unclean, and that in consequence of this revelation, he had raised no objections to coming to Cæsarea, and desired to know why he had been sent for. Cornelius related what had taken place four days before, when all at once the great truth, shadowed forth in his own vision on the house-top in Joppa, flashed on Peter's mind—the truth, clear enough now, but which formed no part of the Jewish creed, that God is no respecter of persons. Satisfied that it was his duty to proclaim Christ to his audience, the apostle forthwith proceeded to state the leading facts in the history of Jesus, dwelling with special emphasis on his resurrection. Scarcely had he commenced his address (Acts xi. 15), when God again interfered, and poured down the Holy Ghost on all who heard the word ; thus setting his seal to the important fact, that the middle wall of partition was for ever broken down, and that Jesus Christ had, by his death on the cross, made of *twain* (Jew and Gentile) *one* new man (Eph. ii. 14, 15). The brethren who accompanied Peter were greatly surprised at what had happened, for they had never imagined that the Gentiles as such were to be admitted to the Church. Peter, however, rightly interpreted this miraculous intervention, and saw that the outward sign of baptism could not be withheld from those who had received what that sign simply represents and seals ; and so he gave orders for their immediate baptism. In this way, the second great onward step in the Church's history has been taken. In this step, man was the mere passive instrument in carrying out the plans and purposes of God—plans and purposes revealed so distinctly that it was utterly impossible for Peter to doubt or hesitate as to the course of conduct he ought in the circumstances to pursue. By four divine but independent interventions, God had clearly signified that the enmity between Jew and Gentile was slain, and that henceforward both, and both alike, were to share in the privileges and blessings of his kingdom.

Although God had, in the manner we have described, revealed his will regarding the admission of Gentiles to the Church, we need not feel surprise at being told that many in Jerusalem

30. Peter is blamed for his conduct.

were ready and willing to blame Peter for his share in the transaction. From what has been already advanced, we can easily understand, and in some sort sympathise with the Jewish view, held up to this time unanimously, it would seem, by the Church in Jerusalem, that while the Gentiles might be received into the Church, it could only be on condition of their becoming Jews, and submitting to the rite of circumcision. It was hard for them to realise that their much loved Judaism was dead ; and accordingly, on Peter's return from Cæsarea, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, and found fault with his having gone in to and eaten with men that were uncircumcised. Peter, put on his defence, rehearsed the whole affair from the beginning, showing clearly that it was not of his seeking—nay, that his own views had coincided with those of his opponents on the present occasion, until God himself so unmistakably indicated his mind in the matter, that to refuse to act as he had done would have been direct disobedience to the will of God. God had given the Gentiles the like gift as he had given the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and Peter felt that he would be notwithstanding God if he declined compliance with his command. This argument silenced his opponents in the meantime, but the controversy soon broke out with great virulence, and continued during the whole period embraced in this history.

The historian, having given an account of Saul's conversion, and of the baptism of the Gentiles by the Holy Ghost, resumes the narrative of the spread of the gospel consequent upon the persecution that arose about Stephen. The course of events leads him to give a somewhat particular account of the founding of the Church in Antioch—a Church which is second in importance only to that of Jerusalem, and which was the first to break through the trammels which Jewish Christians would have imposed on the

31. Preaching of the gospel in Antioch.

preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles. This Church owed its origin to that dispersion of the disciples from Jerusalem which took place after Stephen's martyrdom. Some of those who were scattered abroad on that occasion, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, confining their ministrations to the Jews. A few, however, themselves natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, and on that account probably not so prejudiced as the natives of Jerusalem, addressed themselves to the Greeks.* The Lord owned their work, and multitudes believed. Intelligence of what was going on in Antioch reached the Church in Jerusalem ; and, as the proceedings there were entirely novel, it was deemed advisable to send forth Barnabas to watch over and give what counsel might be required by the Church in Antioch. A better selection could not have been made. He was a good man, with no narrow prejudices, and one who was capable of sympathising with whatever tended to advance Christ's work. Accordingly, having, on his arrival, satisfied himself that the work was a genuine one, and having seen undoubted indications of the grace of God, he set himself, consistently with his character, to act the part of a son of consolation, and exhorted them that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord. The experienced eye of Barnabas quickly detected the importance of Antioch as a mission field, and he resolved on seeking the assistance of Saul, whose zeal and talents he highly appreciated, and with whose commission, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, he was probably acquainted. He went to Tarsus, and having found Saul there, brought him with him to Antioch, where for a year the two laboured indefatigably and with remarkable success. So numerous did the disciples become, and so many were the Gentile converts, that the heathen population

* In the authorised version the reading is "Grecians." But the whole strain of the narrative makes it evident that the correct reading is "Greeks." The gospel had already been preached, and preached freely, to the Grecians, and there would be no necessity for mentioning this fact as peculiar to Antioch. Besides, the proper antithesis to Jews in verse 19 is Greeks, and not Grecians. Grecian is opposed to Hebrew, and Greek to Jew. It seems perfectly manifest that verse 20 implies that "some" preached to others than Jews. That this took place before the conversion of Cornelius need cause no surprise, for his conversion, and the circumstances attending it, seem to have been intended to convince Peter and the Christians in Jerusalem that Gentiles, as such, were to be admitted to the Church.

of Antioch, no longer able to designate them by the title "Jews," coined a new name, and, in derision, termed them Christians.*

While Saul and Barnabas were thus labouring, certain prophets † came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, one of whom, named Agabus, foretold the approach of a severe dearth throughout all Judea—a dearth which actually happened in the reign of Claudius. This intimation induced the Church in Antioch to make a special collection for the brethren who dwelt in Judea, who had probably been impoverished by the practice which prevailed there of selling their possessions for behoof of the Church, and many of whom had, in all likelihood, suffered the loss of goods in the persecution which had swept over the Church in Jerusalem (Heb. x. 34). When the collection had been completed, it was sent to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

About the time of this visit to Jerusalem, probably before it, Herod Agrippa, son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, in order to win the favour of the Jews, commenced a persecution against the Church in Jerusalem. Aware of the influence and power of the apostles, Herod would seem to have decided on putting them to death, before lifting his hand against the general body of the believers. The first victim was James the Apostle, brother of John and son of Zebedee. Finding that the death of James was highly acceptable to the Jews, he arrested Peter, and was only prevented from executing him straightway by the fact that the passover feast was then being celebrated, at which time it was unusual to put any one to death. Peter was thrown into prison, and strongly guarded, sixteen soldiers being told off

32. Death of James and arrest of Peter.

* The Jews would not apply this term to the disciples. They called them Nazarenes or Galileans. The disciples never call themselves Christians. The word is only once used by a Christian writer in apostolic times (1 Peter iv. 16). It would, accordingly, seem to have been given by the heathen portion of the population, who were driven, probably, to coin this appellation, as, from the number of Gentile converts, they could no longer call them "Jews."

† Not necessarily, in New Testament language, a foreteller of future events. Prophesying and preaching are nearly identical (1 Cor. xiv. 31). We do find, however, as in the present instance, that these teachers had the gift of prophecy, strictly so called.

to this duty, four for each watch. To two of these the apostle was chained, while the remaining two kept watch—the one outside the room where he was confined, and the other outside the main door of the prison.* It was Herod's intention to execute him publicly as soon as the passover † was over. In this extremity, when the leaders of the Church seemed doomed to destruction, one after another, the Church betook herself to prayer. The foremost man by far among the Christians was a prisoner under sentence of death; and if God did not interfere, the Church was powerless to do anything for his deliverance. God was putting the Church into the furnace, that, in its extremity, it might lean more on himself. And so we read that prayer was made without ceasing unto God on Peter's behalf. The Church's extremity was God's opportunity. On the very night before the day on which Peter was to be led forth to execution, as he was sleeping between his two guards, a light shone in the prison, and an angel of the Lord coming in smote him on the side, and raised him up. Immediately the chains fell from off his hands, and having, in obedience to the angel's command, bound on his sandals, and cast his garment about him, Peter went out and followed his heavenly guide. They passed the first and second watch, and when they reached the iron gate that led out of the prison into the city, it opened to them of its own accord. The angel conducted Peter through one street, and then left him. It was only then that Peter became aware of the reality of his release: hitherto the whole matter had appeared as a dream. He went immediately to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where, at that very time, many were gathered together praying. His deliverance was in all likelihood effected during the fourth watch; that is, some time between three and six in the morning. Had it been earlier, his absence would have been noticed at the change of the watch, but it was only at *day-break* that the soldiers became

* We infer that this was their position from verse 10, where the expression "ward" means watch or guard. These last two were stationed, accordingly, one outside the door of the room in which the prisoner was, and the other outside the door which communicated with the prison and the court which surrounded it.

† Curiously but significantly translated "Easter."

aware that their prisoner had escaped. At that early hour the Christians in the house of Mary were surprised to hear some one knocking at the outer door ; and they immediately sent a girl, named Rhoda, to ascertain who the visitor might be. They probably feared that it might be some emissary from Herod sent to arrest some of their own number. The girl, recognising Peter's voice, was so overjoyed that she forgot to open the door, and ran in announcing that the very man on whose behalf they were even then praying, was himself standing before the door. So impossible did this appear, that they imagined that the girl was mad ; but when she continued to affirm that it was Peter, they could account for it only on the supposition that it was his angel. On at length opening the door, they saw Peter himself, and were greatly astonished at the sight. We may imagine how their astonishment changed to joy and gratitude when Peter told in what way the Lord had brought him out of the prison, and how they saw therein God's gracious answer to their unceasing prayers. It was impossible for Peter to remain there ; and, having given orders to inform James * and the brethren of his release, he went into another place ; and henceforward his name never occurs in the history, except in connection with the council in Jerusalem which met to discuss the question of circumcision.

The miraculous deliverance of Peter caused great consternation among the guard. They were unable to give any account of the way by which he had escaped. Herod, having caused a rigid but unsuccessful search

33. Death of Herod.

* It will, perhaps, never be satisfactorily determined who this James was. In Gal. i. 19, Paul terms him the Lord's brother. In Matt. xiii. 55, we are informed that James was the name of one of our Lord's brethren. We see no reason to doubt that the persons named in that verse were the veritable sons of Joseph and Mary. There is nothing in Scripture to contradict this, neither will it diminish Mary's claims to our regard to believe that she bore other children besides our blessed Lord. This James could not have been James the Less, one of the twelve, for, apart from the fact that James the Less was the son of Alpheus, we are distinctly told by John (vii. 5) that, long after the call of the twelve, his brethren did not believe on him ; and we cannot conceive it possible that our Lord would have appointed as an apostle, even though he were his own brother, one who did not believe on him. From Acts i. 14, we learn that his brethren did not always continue unbelievers. It would thus appear that the James who occupies such a prominent place in the Church of Jerusalem was not James the Less, but James, the son of Joseph and Mary, and the brother of our Lord.

to be made for him, examined the soldiers, and convinced, it would seem, that they were in some way privy to his flight, gave orders that they should, in accordance with military law, be put to death, and departed sullen and moody from Jerusalem to Cæsarea. He did not long survive the disappointment, which he must have felt keenly, of being thwarted by a society so contemptible as to his mind the Christians were. He had, for some time, been on unfriendly terms with the thriving commercial communities of Tyre and Sidon, and had forbidden the exportation of grain from his dominions to these towns. This loss of their usual supplies, which they were accustomed to draw largely from Herod's territory, was severely felt, and the people of Tyre and Sidon were exceedingly desirous of regaining the king's favour. To effect their purpose, they had recourse to Blastus, the king's chamberlain, whose good offices they managed to secure. By his influence, a deputation from the towns named had an interview with the king, and humbly sued for peace. Their request was granted, and, to give greater formality to the proceedings, and probably for the purpose of displaying his oratorical powers, the vain monarch, arrayed in royal apparel, and seated on his throne, made an oration to them in presence of many of the inhabitants of Cæsarea. When Herod had finished, the people testified their appreciation of his powers by a loud shout, and the blasphemous expression, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." The king, instead of rebuking this fulsome flattery, seems to have accepted it, and immediately he was smitten with a horrible and incurable disease, from the effects of which he died five days thereafter.* His death is distinctly stated to have been a divine judgment —the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory.

* Josephus.

CHAPTER IV.

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

ACTS xiii., xiv. A.D. 45-47.

PAUL and Barnabas, having discharged the trust committed to them, returned from Jerusalem to Antioch, taking with them John Mark, and continued to labour there for some considerable time.

34. Paul & Barnabas set apart to go to the heathen.

Although the Gospel had been preached to the Gentiles, no direct attempt had, up to this time, been made to render Christianity directly aggressive. Paul, on his conversion, had been specially commissioned to bear Christ's name to the Gentiles (Acts ix. 15); but, except in Antioch, and possibly in Cilicia, the commission had not been acted upon. The Church, in all probability, was waiting until God himself should give directions as to the mode in which this branch of her operations was to be carried on. At last the directions came. The Church of Antioch was at this time privileged in having in her midst many eminent servants of God, who, in addition to their ordinary evangelistic labours, spent much of their time in ministering to the Lord * and in fasting. While they were thus engaged, the Holy Ghost, speaking in all likelihood through one of their own number, directed them to set apart Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto they had been appointed. As we have no previous mention of Barnabas having been appointed to any special work, we are led to infer that this message to the Church was preceded by a special revelation to Saul and Barnabas, in which the nature of the

* *Λειτουργούντων.*—*Vide* Alford's note on the passage.

work was unfolded. The brethren, having fasted and prayed, laid their hands on the heads of the two missionaries, and by this simple rite set them apart for the work to which henceforward their lives were to be devoted. Antioch thus becomes the parent of Christian missions to the heathen, and occupies, in relation to the Gentiles, the same position as Jerusalem has hitherto done in relation to the Jews.

The two missionaries, accompanied by John, departed from

35. They visit Antioch and came to Seleucia, a seaport at the mouth of the Orontes. At no great distance lay the large and populous island of Cyprus, the native place of Barnabas.

Conver-
sion of Sergius
Paulus.

Thither they sailed, and landing at Salamis, a harbour on the eastern side of the island, they preached in the synagogues* of the Jews—with what results we are not informed. Passing through the island, they came to Paphos, a town on the western shore, and famed in heathen mythology in connection with the impure worship of Venus. Near Paphos lay the residence of Sergius Paulus, the deputy† of the country, an earnest, truth-seeking man, who sent for the two preachers, and desired to hear the Word of God. There happened then to be at the court of the governor one of those impostors so numerous at that time, who, taking advantage of the very general expectation that prevailed, even among the heathen, of the coming of some great one, insinuated themselves among the upper classes, and, by means of magic and pretended miracles, obtained great influence over the minds of men disgusted with the disgraceful rites of heathenism, and longing for some sure standing-ground amid the doubts and uncertainties which characterised the systems, both of philosophy and theology, which then obtained. The impostor in

* From the fact that the word is in the plural, we would infer that Jews were numerous in the district. Large numbers of them, in point of fact, were engaged in working the mines that abounded in the neighbourhood of Salamis.

† *Αὐθέντας*—proconsul—the title always given to the rulers of those provinces the administration of which was in the hands of the Senate. Roman provinces were of two kinds—those administered by the Senate, and those the government of which was retained by the Emperor. The governors of each kind had each his own distinctive title, and we never find Luke applying to one class the title which belonged to the other. Wherever in the Acts we meet with the term “deputy,” we are to understand it to denote the governor of a senatorial province.

question was a Jew, Barjesus by name, but who had assumed the title of Elymas, or the wise man. Convinced that the preaching of the word would destroy his influence with the governor, Elymas strained every nerve to turn him away from the faith. Paul, acting under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, denounced him as the child of the devil and the enemy of all righteousness; and informed him that, in consequence of his determined opposition to the truth, divine judgment would speedily overtake him, and that too in a shape that should awfully shadow forth the condition of his own heart: "The hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season." The judgment immediately followed; first a mist or dimness came over him, and this was followed by total darkness—touches in the description which reveal the hand of one accustomed to note carefully the progress of disease. The miracle had the effect of satisfying the deputy of the truth of Christianity, and he became a convert.*

Leaving Cyprus, the missionaries sailed to the coast of Asia Minor, and visited Perga, a town of Pamphylia.

While they remained there, John Mark, for reasons which Luke has not mentioned, but

*36. They visit
Antioch in Pi-
sidia.*

which appeared to Paul altogether unsatisfactory (Acts xv. 38), left them and returned to Jerusalem. Their stay in Perga does not seem to have been long. Crossing the high mountains which separate the sea-coast of Asia Minor from the great central table-land of Anatolia, they arrived in Antioch, a Roman colony in Pisidia. There they found a synagogue, and, after the custom of their countrymen, they joined in its worship on the Sabbath-day. The appearance of two strangers soon attracted the notice of the rulers of the synagogue, who, after the lessons for the day, embracing portions of the law and the prophets, had been read, sent unto them, intimating that if they had any word of exhortation for the people they were at liberty

* From this time forward the historian always styles Saul by the name of Paul. Various reasons have been assigned for this change of name—the most probable being that Paul, being the Greek form, is now used inasmuch as the apostle has fairly entered on his mission to the Gentiles.

to address them. Paul, assuming his usual attitude, proceeded to deliver an address, in many points resembling that of Peter on the day of Pentecost, and which may be thus summarised :—

He commences with a rapid survey of their history from the time of Abraham to that of David, detailing in particular God's abounding mercies to them, as evidenced in their deliverance from Egypt, in their being brought safe through the wilderness into the promised land, and in their being finally established in possession of it by David (Acts xiii. 16-22). In accordance with the promises so often made to David, God had, as the crowning mercy of all, raised up from his seed a Saviour unto Israel, even Jesus (ver. 23). This Jesus, heralded by John, had been most unjustly put to death by the Jews ; who knew not that, in so doing, they were fulfilling the very prophecies which were read every Sabbath-day (ver. 24-29). But God raised him from the dead (ver. 30). The apostle, having stated this great cardinal truth of Christianity, as an historical fact, and having supported it by ample proof (ver. 31), proceeds to show that it was in entire harmony with the prophecies regarding the Messiah. He quotes in proof passages from the second and the sixteenth psalms, and conclusively shows that these passages could not apply to David, the writer of these psalms (ver. 32-37). Having thus established, by a comparison of fact with prophecy, the Messiahship of Jesus, he proceeds to proclaim the free forgiveness of sins through faith in his name, and concludes by solemnly warning them of the fearful consequences of unbelief (ver. 38-41).

This discourse produced a great ferment in Antioch. The Gentiles requested that it might be redelivered to them on the following Sabbath, and many of the Jews and religious proselytes at once embraced the new faith. On the following Sabbath a strange spectacle presented itself. Almost the whole city assembled to hear the message of salvation. The old exclusiveness of the Jews speedily manifested itself. They had no objection to hear the gospel themselves, but they could not brook the idea that it should be offered to the Gentiles on

equal terms. Accordingly, as soon as they see the Gentiles desirous of hearing the word of God, they are filled with envy, and set themselves to oppose the apostles, and even blaspheme the holy name of Jesus. We have here the first instance of that hostility with which the Jews regarded the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles—an hostility which meets us at every step in the subsequent history of Paul, and which exposed him to severer persecutions and trials than any which came to him even from the heathen. Nothing daunted by this fierce opposition, the apostles boldly declared that, inasmuch as the Jews thus manifestly put the gospel away from them, they, in obedience to God's command, given, in unmistakable language, in the Old Testament (Isa. xlix. 6), felt themselves warranted in offering to the Gentiles the good tidings which were to all people (Luke ii. 10). This declaration caused great joy among the Gentiles, many of whom believed, and the gospel was preached throughout all the district. This success only served to deepen the hostility of the Jews, who, having gained over the leading citizens, raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and compelled them to leave the country. Nor was the persecution confined to these two: it was directed against the whole body of believers (Acts xiv. 22). Having, in obedience to Christ's command (Matt. x. 14), shaken off the dust of their feet against them, the apostles left Antioch and came to Iconium.

Paul and Barnabas having arrived in Iconium, at once commenced their evangelistic labours among their own countrymen. Their preaching was attended with remarkable success, very many of the Greeks as well as of the Jews becoming converts. This success had the effect of stirring up the enmity of the unbelieving Jews, who succeeded in prejudicing the minds of the Gentile portion of the population against the brethren. For a considerable time, however, no open act of hostility took place, and this interval was employed in the bold proclamation of the word of the Lord, who honoured his faithful servants by enabling them to perform many signs and wonders. The Jews, however, were not idle,

37. They visit Iconium.

and, as the result of their machinations, the city became divided into two parties, one siding with the Jews and the other with the apostles. At last, when they had so far wrought upon the minds of the populace as to be sure of their co-operation, the Jews resolved * on letting loose open persecution —to use the brethren despitefully, and to stone them. But before the resolution could be carried into effect, the Church was made aware of it, and the apostles hurriedly left the town, and betook themselves to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region, where they forthwith commenced to preach the word.

We have no particular account of the success which attended 38. *They visit* the labours of the apostles in the towns of Lystra *& Derbe.* and Derbe. That flourishing churches were founded is evident from the subsequent history. One of the converts on this occasion was, in all probability, Timothy (Acts xvi. 1), whose name occupies such an honourable place in connection with the history of Paul. The stay of the apostles in Lystra was characterised by an incident of a peculiar and interesting nature. A striking miracle was performed on a lame man, who happened, on one occasion, to be one of Paul's hearers. His cure was immediate and complete. The people, struck with what appeared to them the exercise of divine power, concluded that those who could do such wonders must be themselves divine, and in their native dialect exclaimed: "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men;" giving, at the same time, names to the apostles corresponding to the idea they had formed of their relative position. Paul they called Mercury, because he was the chief speaker—Mercury being, in heathen mythology, the logos or revealer of the gods; while to Barnabas they gave the appellation of Jupiter, probably from his royal bearing—Jupiter being reckoned the king of the gods. Not content with this ascription of divine names to the apostles, they set about offering them divine honours. The priest of Jupiter Propylæus† brought oxen and garlands,

* 'Ορμὴ does not mean an "assault," for in that case we should not require to be told that they "were ware of it." It signifies a resolution to do so and so.

† The expression "which was before the city," has, in the original, no reference to

and began to make preparations for offering sacrifice at the gates of the house to which the apostles had retired after the performance of the miracle. It was only then that Paul and Barnabas became aware of the intentions of the populace. Unacquainted with the vernacular of the district, they were hitherto entirely ignorant of the impression which the miracle had produced on this simple and credulous people. No sooner, however, did they understand that these honours were intended for them, than they rushed from the house, and, rending their clothes in token of grief, ran in among the people, and dissuaded them from their idolatrous purpose. The address of Paul on the occasion was admirably adapted to the people and the circumstances. Unable to fall back upon the truths of revealed religion, which he invariably does when speaking to the Jews, he at once took up the only ground which was common to himself and his hearers, and drew his arguments from what we may term the principles of natural religion. He commenced by assuring them that he and Barnabas were men of like passions with themselves, and that the very end and design of their mission was to teach them to turn from these vanities to the living God, the great Creator of all things. Although the invisible things of God were clearly seen from the creation of the world, being understood by the things which are made (Rom. i. 20), yet mankind had not learned the lesson which creation thus taught, but had walked in their own ways. In addition, however, to this witness from creation, God had given another. His providential government of the world he had made, was a witness to himself, which all might understand, manifested, as it was, by the ever-recurring change of seasons, and the abundance which he lavished on his creatures, whereby their hearts were filled with food and gladness. By the exhibition of these simple but sublime truths, which lie at the very foundation of all true conceptions of our relation to God, the apostle endeavoured to divert the minds of his hearers from himself to the living God, and, with difficulty, succeeded

the position of the temple of Jupiter. It is a distinctive name of the god. Jupiter the city protector.

in preventing them from proceeding with the sacrifice. Paul was soon made to feel that cruelty is the usual concomitant of idolatry, and that superstition renders a people fickle and inconstant. The Jews of Antioch and Iconium, hearing of the preaching of the word in Lystra, followed the preachers, and so wrought upon the minds of the mob, that they who a short time before had regarded him as a god, now stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city, leaving him as dead.* As the sorrowing disciples stood round him, evidently regarding him as dead, he rose up, and was able to walk into the city. This restoration was due to divine interposition, and we have, in this incident, an undoubted miracle, as great as that which Paul himself had lately performed. It was not deemed prudent that Paul should continue in Lystra, and accordingly he departed with Barnabas to Derbe, where they preached the word and taught many people.

Derbe was the limit of this first missionary tour. Leaving *39. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch.* it, they returned, visiting Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, "confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we† must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Paul had his own share in the persecutions, and long afterwards, when writing to his beloved Timothy, who was a native of the district, and consequently cognisant of the facts, he reminds him of the persecutions and afflictions which came unto him at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra (2 Tim. iii. 11). The various churches were so far consolidated as to receive a regular organisation, and this organisation was of the simplest kind. Elders were elected, and, after prayer and fasting, solemnly set apart by the apostles to their sacred office. Passing through Pisidia, the apostles again crossed the range of Taurus, and came into Pamphylia. On this occasion they remained for some time in Perga, where they preached the

* See his reference to this, 2 Cor. xi. 25.

† Have we in this "We" a trace of the presence of Luke on the scene. Certainly the full report of the address at Antioch, and the minuteness which characterises the account of the preaching of the gospel there, would seem to indicate that the narrator was an eye-witness of what he describes

word ; after which they took ship at Attalia, and sailed to Syria. On their arrival in Antioch, they assembled the Church, and gave an account of their labours, dwelling particularly on the fact that God had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. We can well understand the joy which this intelligence would produce in a Church constituted such as that of Antioch was.

CHAPTER V.

CONTROVERSY REGARDING CIRCUMCISION.

ACTS XV. 1-35; (GAL. ii.). A.D. 50.

PAUL and Barnabas, after their return to Antioch, continued to labour there for a very considerable time. Their success in their first journey had been very remarkable, more particularly among the Gentiles, multitudes of whom had been added to the Church. This very success was the occasion of a serious controversy in the Church. Paul had everywhere taught that circumcision was not binding on Gentile converts, and he had uniformly acted in accordance with his teaching. This course of procedure was offensive to many of the Jewish Christians, particularly to those of them who belonged to the Pharisaic party, who held that circumcision was, in all cases, necessary to salvation. This question had been determined by God himself in the case of Cornelius, but several years had elapsed since that time, and the number of the Jewish Christians had greatly increased. With this increase came a renewal of the controversy. No scope was given for difference on this question in the Church of Jerusalem, for there all the converts, being Jews, had been circumcised. The Church in Antioch was the mother Church of the Gentiles: the members of that Church consisted largely of Gentiles, and in it, accordingly, the controversy broke out. Certain brethren from Judea came to Antioch, and boldly taught that circumcision was necessary to salvation. This doctrine was so diametrically opposed to Paul's fundamental truth of justification by faith alone, that he could not remain silent and hear such views promulgated. He op-

40. The controversy breaks out in Antioch.

posed these Judaising teachers with all his might ; which led to much dissension and disputation, but without producing any practical settlement of the point in dispute. It was then resolved, in accordance with a special revelation vouchsafed either to Paul himself or to the Church (Gal. ii. 2),* to send a deputation to Jerusalem, with the view of taking the opinion of the apostles and elders there on the matter under discussion. Accordingly, Paul and Barnabas, and certain others, among whom was Titus (Gal. ii. 3),† were sent to Jerusalem on this mission. They went by land, passing through Phenice and Samaria, and everywhere declared the conversion of the Gentiles—intelligence which caused great joy among the churches in these districts, whose sympathies were evidently with the Gentile party, which they strikingly manifested by the mode in which they received and welcomed the members of the deputation.

On their arrival in Jerusalem, they were publicly received by the Church, and gave a full and particular

account of all things which God had done by 41. *Public meeting in Jerusalem.*

doubted the truth of what was then told ; but certain of the believing Pharisees maintained that, in addition to all that had been done, it was absolutely essential that these Gentile converts should be circumcised. In order to have an opportunity of discussing the whole question, it was decided to hold a public meeting of the entire Church (Acts xv. 22). Before this meeting took place, Paul had privately communicated to the leading men of the Church the views which he was in the habit of inculcating on his Gentile converts ; and so satisfactory were his explanations, that James, Peter, and John ‡ gave unto him the right hand of fellowship, fully recognising him as the apostle of the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 2-10). The way being thus smoothed, the public meeting took place. The apostles, before themselves taking any part in the discussion, would

* We assume that the visit spoken of in the 2nd chapter of Galatians is the same as that recorded in Acts xv. Proof on the point will be found in Conybeare and Howson's Life and Letters of St. Paul.

† The earliest mention of Titus in the New Testament, whose name, curiously enough, is not once mentioned in the Acts.

‡ The only time that Paul and John are recorded to have met.

seem to have allowed all, who had anything to advance, an opportunity of expressing their sentiments fully and frankly. All who have had experience of public assemblies will not fail to admire the tact and wisdom thus displayed. Free discussion in a popular assembly is the surest safeguard against future misunderstandings. After this somewhat promiscuous discussion, Peter rose and reminded the brethren of the important part which he had been called to act in connection with the admission of the Gentiles to the Church. God had made choice of him to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, and had emphatically taught that, in their case, circumcision was not necessary, seeing that he had bestowed upon them the like gift as upon the Church in Jerusalem. Since God had made no difference between Jew and Gentile,—since even they, although circumcised, had believed on Jesus Christ, that they might be justified by the faith of Christ (Gal. ii. 16),—why should they tempt God by compelling the Gentiles to become debtors to do the whole law (Gal. v. 3),—an obligation which they themselves, by the very profession of faith in Christ, declared to be a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear. This reasoning was felt to be unanswerable, and, coming from such a man as Peter, made a deep impression on the meeting; for when Paul and Barnabas proceeded to give an account of their labours, all the multitude kept silence, and gave them a respectful hearing. They narrated what God had wrought among the Gentiles by their instrumentality, and, doubtless, gave special prominence to the fact that God himself had given testimony to the word of his grace, by enabling them to perform many signs and wonders among the people, and by bestowing on the churches the gift of the Holy Ghost—a seal of the righteousness of the faith which they had, being uncircumcised (Rom. iv. 11). When the two missionaries had finished, James, the very embodiment of Jewish Christianity, and whose character gave him a position of high influence in the Church, proceeded to address the meeting. He took up the argument from prophecy, and showed satisfactorily that it was in accordance with the mind of God, as revealed in his

word, that the Gentiles should form part of the regenerated and spiritual Israel, of whom the Son of David was constituted head (Amos ix. 11, 12). While prophecy thus indicated that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the Church, the statements of Peter, and of Paul and Barnabas, made it abundantly plain that their admission was not to be made conditional on their submission to the rite of circumcision (Acts xv. 13-18). But although they could not impose the law upon their brethren, it might still be necessary to lay upon them certain restrictions. In almost every city of the empire colonies of Jews were to be found. They still observed the Mosaic ritual, and, on the great principle of subordinating Christian liberty to the edification of the whole body of believers, James proposed that, in deference to Jewish feeling, the Gentiles should be exhorted to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood (Acts xv. 19-21).

The opinion of James, so unequivocally expressed, but breathing, at the same time, so much tenderness to his Jewish brethren, was unanimously adopted. It was agreed to put the opinion in the form of a letter; and, in order to give it greater weight and authority, to send a deputation of their own number to Antioch, who might, by word of mouth, give fuller information on the important decision at which the Church had arrived. Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren, were selected to discharge this responsible and somewhat delicate duty. The letter was in the following terms:—

“The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain men which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment: it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,* men that

* In a letter emanating from Jerusalem, where Barnabas was known so well, his name precedes that of Paul. Luke always puts Paul's name first.

have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which, if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

Such was the result of this celebrated meeting,* and such the settlement of an irritating and distracting controversy. It would have been well for the peace and the prosperity of the Church if all the parties to this settlement had adhered to it, but unfortunately this was not the case, for in a very short time we find even Peter acting in a manner utterly at variance with the sentiments he expressed at the meeting. Others set the decision at open defiance, and ceased not to follow the footsteps of Paul in all his missionary tours, sedulously and pertinaciously endeavouring to obstruct his work, and to disturb the souls of his converts by teaching the necessity of circumcision as a condition of salvation. This party was never numerous; but what they wanted in numbers, they amply compensated for in zeal, and, like all small parties in all ages of the Church, who unduly exalt some outward rite, they counted it a higher honour to make a few proselytes to their own views than to gather into the fold of Christ those who had never obeyed his gospel. In their prosecution of this object, they were not over-scrupulous as to the means they employed. No efforts were spared to lower the authority of Paul, and to make it appear that his own conduct, in regard to this question, was determined, not by principle, but by the caprice of the moment. But, in the meantime, the controversy had been amicably settled, and Paul and Barnabas, accompanied by the members of the deputation from the Church in Jerusalem, proceeded to

* It was not, in any proper sense of the word, a council. The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch alone were represented. It was, in truth, a meeting of the Church in Jerusalem, at which a deputation from Antioch attended. The popular element was largely represented, and the decision came to runs in the name of the apostles and elders and brethren—this last class evidently including “all the multitude” of verse 12.

Antioch, and having assembled the brethren, delivered the epistle, the reading of which produced unmixed satisfaction. "Judas and Silas, being prophets also, exhorted the brethren with many words, and comforted them." After a time, they were sent away in peace, and returned to Jerusalem.

After their return from Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas continued to reside for some considerable time in Antioch, busily engaged in the work of the Lord. ^{43. Peter rebuked by Paul.} We have no means of determining exactly the length of time that elapsed between their return and the commencement of the second missionary tour. Luke simply says that their residence in Antioch on this occasion was for "certain days"—an expression which may cover a few years. It is, in all probability, to this period that we must refer the visit of Peter to Antioch spoken of in Gal. ii. 11-21. We have seen that, in the assembly in Jerusalem, Peter unhesitatingly gave his opinion in favour of the admission of the Gentiles to the Church, free from and untrammelled by the restrictions of the Mosaic law. For some time after his arrival in Antioch, his practice corresponded with his expressed opinions. The arrival, however, of certain Jewish Christians, who are expressly said to have come from James, although we cannot believe authorised by him, seems to have inspired the apostle with his old fear of man. He had been in the habit of meeting with his Gentile brethren without restraint, but, on the coming down of the brethren from Judea, he withdrew and separated himself, and consorted with the Jews only. This dissimulation extended to the other Jewish Christians, and even Barnabas was carried away by it. Paul, justly dreading the effect of this conduct upon the Gentile converts, was compelled to administer a sharp rebuke to Peter in presence of the whole Church, retorting upon him the very arguments which he himself had used at the conference in Jerusalem. It is pleasing to think that this difference produced no lasting alienation between the two great apostles. Long afterwards, Peter speaks of his beloved brother Paul, and earnestly recommends his writings to the attention of his own readers (2 Peter iii. 15, 16).

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY.

ACTS XV. 36—XVIII. 22. A.D. 50-54.

AFTER a stay in Antioch of uncertain duration, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should pay a visit to all the churches which they had planted in their first journey, with the view of ascertaining how they were progressing in their Christian course. To this proposal Barnabas assented, on condition that John Mark, who, it would appear, accompanied them from Jerusalem, should form one of their number. Paul, remembering his desertion of them at the most critical point of their previous journey, declined to accede to this condition. It is evident that Paul regarded John's departure from them at Perga as due to causes which could not justify the step, and he was unwilling to run the risk of being again forsaken at a time, it might be, when aid was most required. And so the two missionaries quarrelled, and the dissension was so hot that they separated. Barnabas, taking Mark with him, set out for Cyprus, his native island, and henceforward his name is not mentioned in the Acts. The sympathies of the Church were evidently with Paul, for, when he had made choice of Silas as his travelling companion, the brethren, previous to their departure, solemnly recommended them to the grace of God; while, in regard to Barnabas, we are simply told that, taking Mark, he sailed into Cyprus. Probably the conduct of Barnabas on the occasion of Peter's recent visit to Antioch had alienated the confidence of the Church; and his determination to take his vacillating nephew along with him would not tend to reinstate him in the good opinion of the Gentile Christians. From the letters of Paul we

44. Separation of Paul and Barnabas.

learn that Mark nobly redeemed his character, and proved himself a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Writing from Rome during his first imprisonment, the apostle gives the Colossians special charge to receive Mark, if he should come among them (Col. iv. 10); and from the peculiar way in which his name occurs in the passage referred to, it has been supposed, and with every appearance of probability, that on some occasion or other Paul had felt himself called upon to warn the Colossians against John Mark—a warning which his subsequent character warranted him in revoking. And when, a few months before his death, he writes from his Roman dungeon for his beloved son Timothy, he asks him to take Mark with him, for he had found him profitable for the ministry (2 Tim. iv. 11).

Paul, accompanied by Silas, departed from Antioch, and passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. He then struck inland, and came to Derbe and Lystra. There resided at that time in Lystra a pious Jewish woman, named Eunice, who, probably on the occasion of Paul's last visit to the town, had become a convert to the Christian faith (2 Tim. i. 5). She had contracted one of those mixed marriages which, though forbidden by the Mosaic law, were now of frequent occurrence. Her husband was a Greek, and, beyond this simple fact, we have no information regarding him. Timothy, the fruit of this marriage, was already a Christian; he had been taught the Scriptures from his infancy, and bore a high character among the brethren in Lystra and Iconium. The apostle, seeing in Timothy a suitable helper in his great work, was anxious that he should join him; and to render him more acceptable to the numerous Jews, who dwelt in all that region, he took him and circumcised him—this rite having been probably refused him from the fact, which was well known to all, that his father was a Greek.* The tie thus formed between Paul and Timothy was severed only by death. The young and ardent missionary

45. *Paul and Silas visit Lys- tra, and are joined by Timo- thy.*

* We have in this incident a beautiful illustration of the apostle's great principle of becoming all things to all men, that he might win the more (1 Cor. ix. 20-22). The well-known fact that Timothy was uncircumcised would seriously interfere with his usefulness among his own countrymen. To remove this obstacle, and as there was no

accompanied the apostle during most of his travels, devoted to him with all the affection of a son to a father (Phil. ii. 22); and when many, from whom he had expected better things, were forsaking him, he could still count on the unwavering attachment of his beloved Timothy (2 Tim. iv. 9, 10). Christian biography furnishes few examples of a love so constant and so disinterested.

Having visited all the churches already planted, and having

46. *Journey through Asia Minor to Troas.* delivered unto them the resolution agreed upon at Jerusalem regarding circumcision, the three

missionaries entered the extensive and populous regions of Phrygia and Galatia. The history in the Acts simply records the fact that they passed through these districts; but as, on the occasion of Paul's next visit, we find special mention made of disciples in these provinces (Acts xviii. 23), and as we know that the churches in Galatia were planted by Paul (Gal. i. 6-9), it seems evident that, in passing through on the present occasion, they had preached the gospel. This impression is confirmed by a careful examination of the Epistle to the Galatians. Some have even gone the length of maintaining that the epistle makes it manifest that he was detained in Galatia by sickness, which was not, however, of so serious a nature as to preclude him altogether from preaching.* Be this as it may, we find that flourishing churches were planted by him in Galatia; and the probability is, that they were established during the visit of which we are now speaking. Leaving these provinces, they endeavoured to go into Asia;† but the Spirit suffered them not, and so they journeyed on, in a general north-westerly direction, until they reached Mysia. There they attempted to go into Bithynia, but again the Spirit interposed and suffered them not. Even in Mysia they were not allowed to labour; and thus, in God's mysterious providence, they were led by a way which they knew not, and found themselves in Troas. From Troas the islands of the *Æ*gean and the coasts of Europe could be dis-

danger of Timothy himself misinterpreting the act, the apostle without hesitation circumcised him. But when false brethren sought to compel him to circumcise Titus, a pure Gentile, on the ground that this was essential to salvation, Paul sternly refused compliance (Gal. ii. 1-5).

* See particularly chap. iv. 12-15.

† For the meaning of this term, see Geographical Appendix.

tinctly seen. The apostle was not long left in doubt regarding his future course. His way, which hitherto seemed so mysteriously closed against him, was now made clear. A vision appeared to him in the night—a man of Macedonia stood by him, importuning him to come over and help them. He made no delay. He saw in the vision the finger of God directing him to a new field of labour, and he prepared to enter in and possess it.

From the change in the form of the narrative from the third to the first person, we learn that in Troas the apostle was joined by Luke.* Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke, taking ship at Troas, ran with a fair wind to the island of Samothrace, under the lee of which they came to anchor for the night; and the next day they arrived at Neapolis, the port of Philippi—thus accomplishing in two days a voyage which, on a later occasion, and in the opposite direction, occupied five (Acts xx. 6). From Neapolis they journeyed to Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony;† and famous in history as the spot where the republicans of Rome made their last stand for freedom. There were few Jews in Philippi; no mention is made of a synagogue, nor any reference to persecutions coming

47. *Arrival in Philippi. Conversion of Lydia.*

* Throughout the subsequent history, Luke's presence can be easily traced by the use of "we" instead of "they." But, apart from this, the style betrays his presence. He describes what he saw exactly as an eye-witness would; hence the term *autoptic*, applied to those portions of the Acts in which Luke bore a part.

† The expression "chief" has caused considerable difficulty. In the sense of being the capital, Thessalonica was the chief city of Macedonia, and Amphipolis of that part of Macedonia in which Philippi lay. In the original the word means "first," and seems to be used in a geographical sense—Philippi was the first city in Macedonia in which the gospel was preached. No such difficulty attaches to the word "colony." "The characteristic of a *colonia* was, that it was a miniature resemblance of Rome. The Roman colonies were primarily intended as military safeguards of the frontiers, and as a check upon insurgent provincials. They served also as convenient possessions for rewarding veterans who had served in the wars, and for establishing freedmen and other Italians whom it was desirable to remove to distance. The colonists went out with all the pride of Roman citizens, to represent and reproduce the city in the midst of an alien population. They proceeded to their destination like an army with its standards, and the limits of the city were marked out by the plough. Their names were still enrolled in one of the Roman tribes. Every traveller who passed through a *colonia* saw there the insignia of Rome. He heard the Latin language, and was amenable, in the strictest sense, to the Roman law. They were entirely free from any intrusion by the governor of the province. Their affairs were regulated by their own magistrates. These officers were named *Duumviri*, and they took pride in calling themselves by the Roman title of *Prætors* (*στρατηγοί*)."—*Conybeare and Howson's Life and Letters of St. Paul*.

from that quarter, such as we find in almost every other town where churches were established. A small company of women, most of them, in all probability, proselytes, were in the habit of meeting on the Sabbath for prayer at a spot outside the town, by the banks of the river Gangites. The spot was selected partly on account of its seclusion, and partly on account of the supply of water, which formed an important element in the Jewish ritual. During the week, the missionaries remained in the town, no doubt embracing every opportunity that presented itself of preaching Christ; and on the Sabbath they betook themselves to the river side, and addressed themselves to the company that assembled there. They were not permitted to labour long in vain. Their first convert was Lydia, a native of Thyatira, a town in Asia Minor. She had come to Philippi in connection with her trade, which was that of a dealer in purple, for which Thyatira had been long celebrated. She was a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and one of those who resorted on the Sabbath to the customary place of prayer. She was thus brought in contact with Paul; and as she listened to his expositions of divine truth, the Lord opened her heart, and she received the word. She was baptised along with her whole household, and became the first fruits of Europe to Christ. It is surely not without deep significance that a woman should thus have been the first to receive in Europe the gospel of the grace of God. Having been thus made a partaker of spiritual gifts, she counted it a privilege and a duty to minister of her substance to those through whose instrumentality she had obtained them; and being a person in comfortable circumstances, she besought the preachers to make her house their home. They were unwilling to lay this burden upon her, but she would take no denial, and during the remainder of their stay in Philippi they took up their abode with her (Acts xvi. 40).

43. *Paul and Silas thrown into prison in Philippi.*

As the apostle was going to the meeting-place by the river side, he was met more than once by a female slave, who was possessed by a spirit of divination.* It is not necessary to inquire into the exact

* Literally in the original it is, as in the margin of our translation, "a spirit of Pytho."

nature of this possession. The whole scope of the narrative makes it abundantly manifest that Paul regarded it as a case of real possession by an evil spirit. No other interpretation will satisfy the requirements of the context. Paul addresses the spirit, and commands it to come out of her. As soon as this has been effected, the damsel either can not or will not "divine" any more; showing clearly that she was no vulgar impostor, but a real demoniac, over whom Satan had, for the time, acquired complete control. This poor girl was the property of a company, who used her for their own mercenary purposes. When the paroxysms of possession came on, they attributed them to the inspiration of Apollo or Pythius, and pretended that her ravings were the utterances of the god. The heathen population of Philippi, duped by these impostors, as the nations were by the false priests of Delphi, willingly gave credence to the story, and paid large sums of money for what were, after all, but the ravings of a maniac. Drawn by an irresistible influence, which she could not control, and which spake to her being not yet beyond hope, for many successive days she met the brethren, and following them, cried, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation"—language which cannot fail to remind us, by contrast, of the cry which those similarly possessed often employed when they were brought into contact with Him who came to destroy the works of the devil (Matt. viii. 29). Paul, moved with holy indignation at this exhibition of the devil's power, and filled with compassion for her who was the subject of it, turned, and in the name of his Master commanded the spirit to come out of her—a command which was instantly obeyed. Whether she became a Christian or not is not recorded; we are distinctly informed, however, that she forthwith ceased to be profitable to her owners. The loss thus produced touched them deeply. Hitherto no public notice seems to have been taken of the Christian work going on, but no sooner had this work of mercy been performed than all Philippi was thrown into a ferment. The owners of the damsel, deprived of their gains, seized Paul and Silas, as the two chief instruments in the case, and dragged

them into the Forum. The magistrates, attended by the lictors,* happened to be there at the time, probably on official business. The charge brought against the apostles was one well fitted to rouse the fanaticism of Roman citizens: "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans." In the very forefront of the accusation they put the fact that the men were Jews—members of that nation which was held in such deep abhorrence by the Romans, and whose continual seditions had, about this very time, caused their expulsion from Rome. They are accused of having thrown the whole city into confusion, and particularly of having introduced modes and forms of religious worship (customs) which were unlawful, inasmuch as they had not received the sanction of the Roman Senate.† The owners of the dispossessed girl knew well the temper of those with whom they had to deal. They knew that nothing was so well calculated to wound their pride and excite their hatred as the allegation of an attempt to tamper with their peculiar privileges as Romans. Nor did they mis-judge the effect of their accusation. The whole multitude at once rose up against the prisoners; and the magistrates, forgetting their position as judges, whose office it should have been to observe at least the forms of justice, prejudged the case, and gave orders to the lictors to strip and scourge them. These cruel orders were immediately carried into execution, after which Paul and Silas were handed over to the tender mercies of the jailer, who received instructions to keep them safely.

* Sergeants—Greek, *ραβδοῦχοι*, rod-bearers; a name derived from the rods which these officers carried when on duty with the magistrates—just as in similar circumstances our towns' officers carry halberds.

† In Rome, and, indeed, in all the heathen nations of antiquity, the Church and State were identical. Hence toleration was unknown, and, in point of fact, could not exist, because to grant toleration was to wink at high treason. From purely political motives, Rome was compelled to allow her conquered provinces to retain their own gods, and their own forms of worship. But in Rome, and in Roman colonies like Philippi, the theory of the constitution was that no religion could be practised until sanctioned by the Senate. Such religions were called "religiones novae or illicitee." Christianity was in the position of being a *religio nova*, and the very profession of it subjected the Christians to the penalty of death. For nearly three hundred years it continued forbidden, and persecuting emperors had simply to enforce the law, whenever they wished to let loose the flames of persecution. The Emperor Gallienus, A.D. 259, was the first to recognise Christianity as a *religio licita*—or lawful religion.

The jailer, having received such a charge, obeyed it to the letter. He thrust his prisoners into the inner prison, a noisome and pestilential dungeon, and made their feet fast in the stocks, thus preventing change of position, which, in their circumstances, would have been no small alleviation of their sufferings. But though persecuted, the disciples were not forsaken—though cast down, they were not destroyed. The peace of God kept their hearts, and in the midst of all their sufferings they were enabled to sing praise unto him for all his goodness unto them. In the dead of night, long after the jailer had retired to rest, they sang praises so loudly that their voices resounded through the prison, and the prisoners heard what in that place and at that hour must have been to them an unwonted sound. While they were thus engaged, God interposed for their deliverance. All at once there was a great earthquake, shaking the prison to its very foundations, causing the doors to burst open and the fetters to fall from every prisoner. The jailer, awakened by the unearthly noise, saw to his dismay that every door was open, and, naturally enough, imagined that the prisoners had escaped. Knowing nothing of the cause which had produced this state of things, he was too alarmed and confused to satisfy himself of the truth of his surmises, but, with the stoical indifference of a Roman officer, drawing his sword from its scabbard, he was on the point of committing suicide. Paul, who from his position could not see him, either supernaturally informed of his intention, or divining it from hearing him draw his sword, cried with a loud voice, “Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.” That which had thrown the jailer into confusion had overawed the prisoners, and though free, and every door open, not one had attempted to escape. Calling for lights, the jailer sprang into the inner prison, into which he had a few hours before thrust Paul and Silas, and, trembling, threw himself down before them. He immediately brought them out of their loathsome dungeon into some other apartment of the prison, and, remembering perhaps the cry of the poor demoniac, that these men taught the way of salvation, he ex-

49. *Conversion
of the jailer, and
release of Paul
and Silas.*

claimed, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul directed his attention to Him who alone can save, and he was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ* and both he and his house should be saved. The jailer immediately assembled all his household, who listened to the word of life, which came to their hearts with power and in the demonstration of the Spirit. The change wrought on him soon manifested itself. He took them that same hour of the night, and with his own hands washed their stripes, after which, along with his whole house, he was baptised, and thus formally admitted into the Christian Church. Nor did the jailer's kindness stop here. Rejoicing in his newly found peace in believing, he brought the two prisoners up † to his own house, and set meat before them. The events described must have occupied a good part of the night, but it seems evident that before daylight Paul and Silas were again conducted to prison, although they were no longer subjected to the cruel treatment of the evening before. In the morning, the magistrates, either alarmed by the reports of what had happened, or, which is more probable, regretting the rash and unwarranted proceedings of the previous day, sent the lictors to the jailer with orders to allow the prisoners to go free. The jailer hastened to them with the joyful intelligence, and, opening the prison doors, desired them to depart in peace. Paul, who knew well that the magistrates had, in the excitement of the moment, allowed themselves to become parties to an unlawful action, refused to leave the prison in this underhand sort of way. The citizens had pleaded their privileges as Romans when they called for punishment on these Jews; Paul will show them that he too is a Roman, and will not, when necessity arises, bate one jot of his rights. He has the magistrates in his power, and he will use that power, not for the mean purpose of gratifying revenge, but with the view of placing the whole Christian Church in Philippi under the protection of the very magistrates who had used him so shame-

* The jailer calls them *κύριοι*—lords, what must I do to be saved? Paul tells him to believe on *τὸν Κύριον*—the Lord Jesus Christ; thus directing his thoughts from themselves to the Lord Jesus—the only Lord.

† The original—*ἀναγαγών*—makes it clear that the jailer's house was over the prison.

fully. Their crime had been greatly aggravated. They had beaten them—they had beaten them openly—in the face of day they had exposed the naked shoulders of Roman citizens to the rude gaze of the rabble of Philippi, and they had done this without examination and without trial. The injury had been public, so also must the reparation. The magistrates must not thrust them out privily, as if they were malefactors—they must come themselves and fetch them out in sight of all men. The lictors reported Paul's message to the magistrates, who were thrown into a state of great trepidation when they learned that the prisoners were Romans.* The proud boast of being a Roman was still of sufficient advantage to procure protection even among barbarous nations, who knew full well that any insult to a Roman citizen would be visited with sure and speedy punishment. If this were so, how aggravated was the conduct of Roman magistrates, in themselves bringing a deep reproach on that name which was their highest honour. The magistrates of Philippi, conscious that their conduct would not stand investigation, were fain to come in the attitude of suppliants and bring the prisoners out, thus acknowledging that the proceedings of the preceding day had been unjustifiable. At the same time, fearing a renewal of the disturbances, and that they might not be able to afford protection to the apostles, they requested them to depart out of the city. To this request they were quite willing to accede, and having held a parting meeting with the brethren in the house of Lydia, and given them such consolation as their circumstances required, they departed from the city, leaving Luke behind them.† Long afterwards we find him joining Paul in this same town (Acts xx. 5). The Church of Philippi, the first planted in Europe, was always very dear to Paul. The Philippians cherished great love and reverence for their spiritual father, which they manifested on various

* We do not know how Paul obtained this privilege. He tells Lysias, when he examined him on the point, that he was "free-born" (Acts xxii. 28). By the laws of Rome, citizens could not be scourged until after an appeal to the people had been taken, nor put to the torture in any case. "Facinus est vinciri civem Romanum, scelus verberari, prope parricidium necari." It is evident that Silas was also a citizen.

† We gather this from the change in the form of the narrative, from the first to the third person, which continues from Acts xvii. 1 to chapter xx. 5.

occasions by sending contributions to him for the supply of his temporal wants. Shortly after he left the town, when he was labouring in Thessalonica, they sent once and again unto his necessity (Phil. iv. 16). And when intelligence reached them that he was a prisoner in Rome, they despatched Epaphroditus to visit him, who carried with him another token of their grateful remembrance (Phil. iv. 18). The memory of all their kindness to him filled the old man's heart with the most lively emotions of gratitude, and when he would thank them, he could only say from the overflowings of a full heart, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19).

After their departure from Philippi, Paul, Silas, and in all likelihood Timothy,* travelled along the *Egnatian Road*, and, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, arrived in Thessalonica, a town situated on the Thermaic Gulf, and distant about one hundred miles from Philippi. Being a flourishing commercial city, Thessalonica contained a large Jewish population. The apostle, still bearing on his person the traces of his shameful treatment at Philippi (1 Thess. ii. 2), was compelled, at least previous to the arrival of the contributions of the Philippian Church, to follow on week days his trade of tent-making, in order to supply his temporal necessities (2 Thess. iii. 8), but on the Sabbath day he betook himself to the synagogue and reasoned with his countrymen out of the Old Testament Scriptures. We have a brief but remarkably distinct account of his mode of procedure on this occasion—which, indeed, was his customary method in dealing with the Jews. From the prophecies of the Old Testament he proved that, contrary to the expectation of the Jews, the Christ there foretold was set forth not merely as a reigning and triumphant, but also as a suffering Messiah. And not only was he thus set forth as a man of sorrows and ac-

* Although Timothy is not mentioned in the Acts in connection with Thessalonica, it seems certain, from the address in the epistles to the Thessalonians, that he was along with Paul in that town. He was sent back from Athens to supplement the apostle's teaching (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2), which would hardly have been the case if he had not previously made some stay among them along with the apostle.

quainted with grief, but it was, with equal emphasis, foretold that he should die and rise again from the grave. Having thus opened up to them the true meaning of the Messianic prophecies, he went on to show that Jesus, whom he preached unto them, was the very Christ thus announced by the holy men of old, who spake beforehand of his sufferings and the glory that should follow. These discussions continued for three successive Sabbath days, and were attended with the usual results. Some of the Jews believed, but the bulk of the converts were from among the Gentiles. Of the devout Greeks a great multitude believed, and of the chief women not a few. From the whole tenor of the narrative, and from the fact that the Philippians sent more than one contribution to him in Thessalonica, it is extremely probable that the apostle's stay was not limited to three or four weeks, as at first sight might appear. The three Sabbath days (Acts xvii. 2) may refer to the time which was devoted exclusively to preaching to the Jews, and, as the majority of them continued impenitent, the apostle, in all likelihood, followed the plan which he adopted in the Pisidian Antioch, and henceforward turned to the Gentiles. This inference is strengthened by the fact that, before leaving the town, he had become the guest of Jason, in whose house, we may well believe, the Church was in the habit of assembling. From his letters to this Church, we gather that the apostle, in his public preaching, dwelt much on the coming of the Lord Jesus,*—a fact in singular harmony with the charge brought against him by the unbelieving Jews. From the same source we learn that the Jews were more than ordinarily active in their opposition—an activity which leads him to speak of them with unwonted severity (1 Thess. ii. 14-16). At last their enmity burst out into open violence. Associating with themselves certain lewd fellows, drawn from the very refuse of the population,† they soon collected a mob—no difficult matter in a city like Thessalonica—and threw the whole town into confusion. They assaulted the house of Jason, where the disciples

* See 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 13-17; v. 1-3. 2 Thess. i. 8-10; ii. 1-12.

† Ἀγόπαλοι—hangers on about the Agora, men ready for any desperate enterprise—the “canaille” of the French.

lodged, with the view of dragging them before the demos—or public assembly of the citizens. Intelligence of their intended assault had reached Jason in time to allow the apostles to be concealed. Disappointed in not finding them, the mob laid hold of Jason himself and certain other brethren, and dragged them before the rulers.* The only charge which they could bring against Jason was that of having harboured men who had turned the world upside down, and who did contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king—one Jesus. The accusation was one of treason, and was skilfully adapted to reach men who owed their peculiar privileges to the clemency of the Roman Emperor, and, who would, accordingly, be deeply interested in proving their loyalty by putting down any attempt at setting up a rival. But the rulers were men of a different stamp from the magistrates of Philippi. They were put about when they heard the charge against Jason, but they did not allow their zeal for the emperor to blind them to the injustice of the accusation, and they refused to be led away by the unreasonable clamour of the Jews. They considered it sufficient to bind over Jason and those who were with him to keep the peace ; but beyond this very natural step, no action was taken by the rulers against the Christians. On giving the requisite security, Jason and his friends were allowed to depart in peace.

After having come under obligation to prevent any further

51. *Paul visits* trouble, the Christians of Thessalonica deemed it *Berea.* advisable that Paul and his companions should leave the town, and, accordingly, they sent them away by night. Having arrived in Berea, they forthwith commenced operations in the synagogue of the Jews, who were not animated

* Πολιτάρχαι—politarchs—an entirely different title from that given to the magistrates of Philippi, but entirely in accordance with the different constitution of the town. Thessalonica was a municipium, or *urbs libera*, which enjoyed the right of self-government, and was free from the control of the provincial governor. The Romans were in the habit of conferring this privilege upon towns, either in return for some signal service rendered to the State, or on account of their celebrity. They left the form of government which they found existing. Hence, while the constitution of every *colonia* was the same, the constitution and mode of government in different “free towns” varied. Here, in Thessalonica, we find a popular assembly—*δῆμος* (Acts xvii. 5), and at least more than two magistrates—*πολιτάρχαι*, a title actually given to the magistrates of Thessalonica in inscriptions found in the town. Luke’s accuracy of description proves the truth of the narrative.

by the same narrow bigotry as their countrymen in Thessalonica. They were of a more noble disposition, and did not condemn until they had first searched the Scriptures, in order to satisfy themselves whether Paul's preaching was in accordance with the revealed will of God. This conduct was attended by its appropriate results. Many were convinced and believed. A large and flourishing church was formed, embracing among its members many Greeks—both men and women—belonging to the higher classes of Berean society. Intelligence of this remarkable success reached the Jews of Thessalonica, who, true to their character, immediately started for Berea, and endeavoured to stir up the people against Paul. The brethren, unwilling to expose the apostle to the risk of persecution, and equally unwilling to do anything which might give the Jews an opportunity of indulging their riotous propensities, sent away Paul in the direction of the sea, while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens, and, after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him there, they departed, leaving him in Athens alone.

It would appear that the apostle had but slender expectations of much success in Athens. His stay in the town was determined by the hope that Silas and Timothy would join him there. While waiting for them, he was deeply moved to see that the city was wholly given to idolatry. On every hand he was met with evidences of this idolatrous tendency. At every step he took he was confronted with some heathen temple, or some image, erected to one or other of the countless deities or heroes whom the Athenians worshipped. Such idolatry produced its natural fruit. The people were vain and frivolous, living much on the glorious memories of the past, but showing by their conduct that they had degenerated from the virtue and the valour of their sires. The town still retained the shadow of its old renown, and was the favourite resort of the Roman youth, whose education was not considered complete without a longer or shorter residence in the mother of arts. Strangers from all quarters thronged the streets, whose main employment consisted in hearing or repeat-

52. *Paul visits Athens.*

ing the latest news, in discussing the most recent philosophical theory propounded, or in retailing the current gossip of the hour. Such a people were not likely to be deeply touched with the story of the Cross. They might give it a patient hearing, but they would regard it as one of those systems which were springing up daily, which would run its little hour and then be superseded by something newer still. The apostle, however, although he could not but be aware of the unlikely soil around him, was not deterred from scattering the precious seed of life. He visited his countrymen in the synagogue, and there discussed with them the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Nor did he confine his labours to the Jews. In the Agora—the places of public resort, where discussions were continually going on—he reasoned with all whom opportunity threw in his way. In the course of these discussions he was encountered by certain philosophers, holding respectively the tenets of the Epicureans and the Stoics. The former, called after Epicurus, the founder of the sect, held that man's highest good consisted in pleasure—not in the gross sensual form of the later Epicureans, but in the absence of all trouble and pain. They held that the soul, like the body, was mortal, and that death annihilated both. To such men the doctrine of the resurrection must have appeared foolishness. The Stoics, founded by Zeno, were so called from the place where they assembled.* They placed man's chief good in a lofty disregard of all surrounding circumstances. Man was a god unto himself, who, like all the gods, must submit to the stern decrees of fate. Such being the case, he was the wisest man who remained totally unmoved amid joy or sorrow, and took whatever good the gods provided him. Men holding such views were not likely to be attracted by a system that proclaimed humility as the root and spring of all virtue. It has been well remarked that these two sects represent the two chief enemies which the gospel has ever had to contend with—pleasure and pride.† Paul's discussions with these philosophers produced results differing according to the different

* $\Sigma\tauο\delta$, a porch or piazza.

† Conybeare and Howson (vol. i. p. 397), whose whole account of the apostle's stay in Athens is admirable.

characters of his hearers. Some, with a mixture of flippancy thoroughly characteristic of Athens, dismissed both the preacher and his message by sneeringly styling him “a babbler.” Others, in equal ignorance, but with more regard to the evident earnestness of the man, looked upon him as a setter forth of strange gods, as one who had come to introduce among them the worship of some new divinity, inasmuch as he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection. Desirous of giving him an opportunity of expounding his views in a situation better adapted for that purpose than the Agora, they took him and brought him to Mars’ Hill, an eminence in their city, where the highest legal tribunal held its meetings, and which, from its position, was admirably suited for public speaking. The whole strain of the narrative makes it evident that the apostle was not brought to this spot as a prisoner. Throughout the proceedings he was treated with the utmost courtesy. They tell him, that as he brought strange things to their ears, they were desirous to know what his new doctrine was, and they would feel obliged if he would explain the nature and bearing of his opinions. When the apostle has complied with the request thus politely conveyed to him, he is allowed to depart, and no public notice is taken of his preaching.

It was in the circumstances described that Paul delivered that marvellous address which has been the admiration of the Church in all ages, and which contains depths of meaning which have not yet been sounded. Standing on Mars’ Hill, and doubtless, after his manner, stretching forth his hand, he addressed his audience in language to which their ears had been long accustomed, as “Ye men of Athens.” With admirable tact, he endeavours to win a favourable hearing by gracefully complimenting them upon the great reverence which they showed to the gods;* as an example of which he mentions that, in passing through their city examining the objects of devotion, he had seen an altar, on which were inscribed the words, “To THE UNKNOWN GOD.” The fact of

53. *Paul's address at Athens.*

* *Δεισιδαιμονεστέρους*—not superstitious, at least in our sense of the word; for any such idea would at once have offended his hearers and roused their anger—but reverential to the gods.

such an inscription existing was, the apostle argues, a tacit admission on the part of the Athenians that they were ignorant of the true God, but that it was possible to attain to this knowledge. His object was to bring before them that God whom they were thus groping after, and this he does by announcing him first as the creator of all things. The world and all things that are therein were made by him—he is Lord of heaven and earth; and this fact was sufficient to show that mere temple-worship was not acceptable to him, and that the countless gifts and offerings which they lavished upon their temples were not needed by him who is Lord of all. For he is not only the creator, he is also the preserver of all things. Our life and breath, and all things, are absolutely in his hands. From him we receive them all, and on him we are always and entirely dependent (Acts xvii. 22-25). And not only so, but God is the governor of the universe which he has made, and which he thus continually preserves. All the various nations of the earth, sprung from one common stock, have received from him that portion of the earth's surface which he saw fit to assign them. The very bounds of their habitation were determined by him, and the times during which they were to exist (ver. 26). These attributes of God, which might be read from an attentive examination of his works and his ways, were intended to serve an important end in the moral government of the world—even that of leading men to seek the Lord, if haply, through the sure but dim light of nature, they might feel after him and find him (ver. 27). Not, however, that he is far removed from us, and takes no concern in us, as if we were altogether beneath his notice, for in him we live and move and have our being,—a truth apprehended by some even of their own poets,* who have said :

“ We are also his offspring ” (ver. 27, 28).

If the fact that God is the creator of all things shows the insufficiency of mere temple-worship, the fact that he is man's creator in particular, that mankind are his offspring, shows that image-worship, or idolatry, cannot be acceptable to God—that any

* The words quoted are from Aratus, a native of Tarsus, Paul's own birthplace.

representation of the Godhead in gold, or silver, or stone, must be offensive to our common Father (ver. 29). Although these truths might have been ascertained from the works of God, although men might have groped after him and found him, still the very existence in their midst of the altar to which he had referred, was a conclusive proof that such had not been the result. The world by wisdom knew not God, and he, in his all-wise and gracious providence, overlooked those times of ignorance, during which all nations walked in their own ways ; but this was to be the case no longer. God was now commanding all men everywhere, without reference to nation or rank, to repent, because he had appointed a day in which he would judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he had ordained, whereof he had given assurance unto all men, in that he had raised him from the dead (ver. 30, 31).

The mention of the resurrection brought the discourse to a close. The impressions produced by the dis- 54. *Effects of course were various. Some mocked. The very this address.* idea of a resurrection was one only to be laughed at. Others, probably somewhat solemnised by the impassioned earnestness of the speaker, put the matter off by saying, “ We will hear thee again of this matter.” And so, with these various impressions agitating the minds of his hearers, Paul left them. But his words were not altogether ineffectual. A few men adhered to him, among whom was Dionysius, a member of that court, which took its name from the very hill on which Paul had spoken. Contrary to what we have seen to be the case in the other towns visited in this journey, very few of the Athenian women became converts. One is mentioned by name, and we need not suppose that Damaris was the only female convert, but the emphatic statement that *certain men* clave unto him, leads to the conclusion that the converts, the whole number of whom was probably small, contained very few women. We have seen that the apostle’s stay in Athens was determined by the expectation of the speedy arrival of Silas and Timothy (Acts xvii. 16). The history makes no mention of their having joined him in Athens. But it seems evident from the Epistles to the Thessa-

lonians that Timothy reached the apostle before his departure from the town, and was immediately sent back to Thessalonica to establish the Christians there, and to comfort them concerning the faith (1 Thess. iii. 1, 2). It will be remembered that the apostle was obliged to leave Thessalonica very hurriedly. While in Berea, he had more than once purposed to return to the town, but had always been prevented (1 Thess. ii. 18). His stay in Thessalonica had been brief, and he had not had time to expound so fully as he could have wished the doctrine of Christ (1 Thess. iii. 10). To supply this deficiency, and to comfort the Thessalonians in some bitter persecution which they were called upon to endure, the apostle sent Timothy to Thessalonica, while he himself, finding that Athens would not receive his message, departed and went to Corinth.*

Corinth, in which Paul now found himself, was destined to

55. *Paul arrives at Corinth.* occupy an important place in apostolic history. Everything, accordingly, which relates to the planting of Christianity in the city, possesses a special interest, and we fortunately enjoy in Paul's own letters abundant materials to enable us to fill up the outline which the history in the Acts presents. On his arrival in the town, the apostle was obliged to have recourse to manual labour to supply his temporal necessities. He fell in with one Aquila, a Jew, born in the province of Pontus, who, with his wife Priscilla, had about this time taken up his abode in Corinth, where he carried on the trade of tent-making. They had but recently come from Rome, having along with their countrymen been expelled from that city by the Emperor Claudius.† Paul took up his abode with them, and wrought in their factory. We are not told that they were at this time Christians; the probability is that they were not, for Paul attached himself to them for the express reason

* It is the opinion of some that Timothy was sent to Thessalonica from Berea, and that he and Silas came up again with Paul in Corinth, as stated in Acts xviii. 5. This may have been so, but the statement in 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2, certainly leaves the impression that Timothy was with Paul in Athens.

† We have no accurate historical information regarding this expulsion. Suetonius, writing of Claudius says, "Judeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit;" but whether Chrestus was a real person, or whether Suetonius confounded the Christians with the Jews, and speaks of the outbreaks that took place in connection with the preaching of Christ, we cannot say.

that he was of the same craft. While thus occupied during the week, he devoted his Sabbaths to the work of preaching, and in the synagogue persuaded both Jews and Greeks. In the midst of these occupations Silas joined him from Berea, and Timothy from Thessalonica, whither, as we have seen, Paul sent him from Athens.

Timothy, on his arrival, cheered the apostle's heart by the good accounts he was able to give of the converts of Thessalonica. He told him of their

*56. Writes the
First Epistle to
the Thessalonians.*

faith and charity, and that they had good remembrance of him always, desiring greatly to see him (1 Thess. iii. 6). But while he was thus able to report so favourably on the general state of the Church, he had found during his visit that a widespread impression prevailed that the day of the Lord was nigh at hand, and that they only would share in the full benefits of the Lord's coming who should be alive when that event happened. These impressions led some members of the Church to a dreamy sort of inactivity (2 Thess. iii. 10-12), and others to grieve unreasonably for their friends and relatives who had fallen asleep (1 Thess. iv.). The apostle had been exceedingly anxious to pay a second visit to the Church. It had been his prayer night and day that he might see their face again, and perfect what was evidently lacking in their faith (1 Thess. iii. 10). In present circumstances such a visit was impossible ; and so, to make up in some measure for his personal absence, he sends them the letter which we have under the name of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—the earliest extant letter of Paul—in which, in addition to many general exhortations, he endeavours to correct the false inferences which had been drawn from his teaching regarding the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The arrival of Silas and Timothy inspired the apostle with

* It is interesting to remark that the style of the letter bears evidence of its early origin. It contains no lengthened elaboration of doctrine, and scarcely any reference to the many evils which speedily sprang up in the Church. Compared with the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, those to the Thessalonians indicate that, when they were written, controversies had not sprung up, and it was not necessary to lay the foundations of the faith deep and strong in elaborate processes of logical reasoning.

new life and energy for his work in Corinth. This renewed vigour, consequent, we doubt not, on the sympathy and co-operation of genial and like-minded fellow-labourers, soon produced its natural fruit, in so far as the Jews were concerned. They opposed themselves, and blasphemed the holy name of Jesus. In this opposition Paul saw more and more clearly the finger of God directing him to the Gentiles, and he did not hesitate long as to what course he ought to pursue. By one of those symbolic actions, so significant to a Jewish mind, he intimated his intention of going to the Gentiles. He shook his raiment, and solemnly protesting that he was clean from the blood of all men, he departed from the synagogue, and henceforward assembled the Church in the house of a proselyte named Justus, which is described as being close by the synagogue. He will not altogether give up his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. His heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, that they might be saved; and, in the selection of a place where he may preach the gospel, when compelled to leave the synagogue, he would seem to have had in view the desire of provoking to jealousy those who were so dear to him, if by any means he might save some of them (Rom. xi. 14). His work among the Jews had not been altogether ineffectual. Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and all his house, believed; but the Jewish converts were few, in proportion to the number of Jews in Corinth. Paul's step in separating himself from the synagogue met with the approval of his Master, who spake unto him in the night by a vision, telling him to speak on without fear, for he would be with him to protect him, and assuring him that his labours would not be in vain, for he had much people in the city. This encouragement was timely. In all the other towns which he had visited, persecution had overtaken him, and the chief agents in the work of persecution had been his own countrymen. In Philippi, he had been shamefully scourged. Thessalonica he had been forced to leave hurriedly; and he was compelled to flee from Berea. It was impossible for Paul not to dread a repetition of these outrages

in Corinth, especially after the very decided step he had taken in going boldly over to the Gentiles. The words of Jesus must, in these circumstances, have been very consoling to him, and must have sent him with fresh ardour to the work he had in hand. Thus encouraged, he continued to labour in Corinth for a year and six months,* and established one of the largest and most flourishing churches of the first century. From his letters to the Corinthians we learn that the majority of the converts was drawn from the poorer classes. Not many of the wise, or mighty, or noble, enrolled themselves in the ranks of the Christians. In Corinth it was emphatically true that to the poor the gospel was preached: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are” (1 Cor. i. 26-28). And if their social standing was low, their moral condition had been lower still. The gospel of the grace of God had seized hold of the very dregs of the Corinthian population (1 Cor. vi. 9-11), and converted them into temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in (1 Cor. vi. 19). From these letters we also learn that the apostle’s style of preaching in Corinth was characterised by studied simplicity. The Corinthians, like all the Greeks, were given to the study of philosophy, and were apt to be unduly dazzled by displays of eloquence. This latter feature in their character would naturally lead them to set a high opinion on wisdom,† and to undervalue the plain and unadorned style in which Paul set before them the truths which he was commissioned to communicate. But the very fact that such would be the case seems to have induced him to adopt this style: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the

* This period may embrace the whole time since his arrival, or it may be reckoned from the date of his separation from the Jews.

† $\Sigma\phi\ell\alpha$ —philosophy; mere human learning.

testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power ; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God " (1 Cor. ii. 1-5).

We have seen that shortly after his arrival in Corinth, Paul ^{58. Writes the} wrote and despatched his First Epistle to the *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.* This letter, so far from allaying the uneasiness which prevailed in the Church in that city, had only served to increase it. It would appear that some parties in that Church had gone the length either of forging a letter in his name, or at least of pretending to have received one from him, which was made the means of shaking the minds of the brethren, and of troubling them regarding the coming of the day of the Lord (2 Thess. ii. 2). However this might have been, much restlessness existed—the symptoms, which Timothy had observed and reported, had increased, and great practical errors were beginning to manifest themselves. In order to correct these errors, and to remove the cause of them, the apostle wrote his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians ;* the main design of which was to show that the *coming of that day* should be preceded by a great apostasy, and the revelation of the son of perdition (2 Thess. ii.), and that the uncertainty of the time should have the effect of leading, not to remissness, but to zealous and faithful labour in the Lord (2 Thess. iii.). To prevent, as far as possible, any one from forging letters in his name, and thus using his authority for opinions and practices which were not sanctioned by him, the apostle wrote the salutation to this epistle with his own hand—a practice which he henceforward followed in all his letters (2 Thess. iii. 17).

Eighteen months were thus spent in preaching in Corinth, and in instructing by letters the Church of Thessalonica. At

* It was written some time during the eighteen months of Acts xviii. 11, probably soon after the first epistle. That it was written from Corinth is evident. Silas and Timothy were with him (2 Thess. i. 1), but they joined him in Corinth (Acts xviii. 5).

the end of that time, a new deputy* came into the province of Achaia. This was Gallio, the brother of Seneca, the Roman philosopher, who had been preceptor to the notorious Nero. The Jews, who hitherto appear to have been restrained from intermeddling with Paul, took advantage of the arrival of a new deputy to make an effort to arrest his work. Imagining that Gallio would naturally be desirous of ingratiating himself with those who formed a no inconsiderable portion of his subjects, they resolved on invoking his authority in support of what they deemed their religious privileges. The Jewish religion was tolerated by the Romans—it was a *religio licita*—and the Jews in Corinth wished it to appear that toleration included the right of protection from proselytism. Accordingly, they made insurrection against Paul, and, having brought him to the judgment-seat, charged him with persuading men to worship God contrary to the (Mosaic) law. But they had completely mistaken the character and the disposition of the man with whom they had to deal. Paul was quite prepared to meet the charge, but Gallio declined to hear him, telling the Jews that, in any case of a civil or criminal nature, he would gladly listen to them, but that he must peremptorily refuse to interfere in a case which merely raised questions of words and names, and of their law; and to show how little sympathy he had with them, and what they had to expect at his hands, he drove them from the judgment-seat. The Greeks, who were standing by, observing the unceremonious way in which Gallio treated the Jews, embraced the opportunity of indulging the bitter grudge which they cherished towards them, and, seizing Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue,† they beat him under the very eyes of Gallio, who allowed the proceeding to pass unchallenged. In this way the enmity of the Jews recoiled on their own heads, and Paul's position in Corinth was more secure than ever. Accordingly, he continued in the town a “good while” longer,

59. *Insurrec-
tion of the Jews
against Paul.*

* Achaia was a proconsular province.

† Probably the successor of Crispus, and not necessarily the same as the Sosthenes whom Paul afterwards calls his brother (1 Cor. i. 1), although it is possible that Sosthenes, like Crispus, may have become a Christian.

and then proceeded to Cenchrea, the eastern harbour of Corinth, with the view of sailing into Syria. For some reason, with which we have not been made acquainted, the apostle had, about this time, taken upon himself a vow, the exact nature of which we do not know.* It could not have been the Nazarite vow, strictly so called, for it required the hair to be shorn in Jerusalem and consumed on the altar (Num. vi.), but Paul's hair was shorn in Cenchrea. Vows were undertaken in acknowledgment of some great deliverance effected, or some signal mercy vouchsafed. It may have been that Paul undertook this vow in grateful acknowledgment of God's abounding mercy to him in Corinth, and of having fulfilled his promise of being with him and delivering him from all his enemies. From Cenchrea he sailed to Ephesus, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla, whom he left there, he himself entering at once into the synagogue and preaching Christ. On being pressed to remain some time in Ephesus, he refused, on the ground of his great desire to be in Jerusalem against the approaching feast—probably Pentecost ; but he promised to return as soon as, in God's good providence, he had an opportunity. Leaving Ephesus, he sailed to Cæsarea, and having gone up to Jerusalem and saluted the Church, he went down to Antioch, whence he had started some years before.† Whether Timothy and Silas accompanied him from Corinth on this occasion we cannot tell. The name of Silas drops from the history at Corinth. From the fact that we find Timothy with the apostle in Ephesus during his third journey (Act xix. 22), it is probable that he was left there along with Aquila and Priscilla, when Paul hastened to Jerusalem.

* We have not deemed it necessary to say anything regarding the opinion that it was Aquila who had taken the vow upon him. The whole context, and even the structure of the passage, make it evident that Luke refers the vow to Paul. May not his desire to be present at Jerusalem at the feast be connected with this vow?

† It is not said in the text that he went to Jerusalem, but it is clearly implied. "He went up," will exactly suit the journey from Cæsarea to Jerusalem ;—"He went down," the journey from Jerusalem to Antioch. Besides, as Luke informs us that Paul was exceedingly anxious to be in Jerusalem at the feast, it is almost certain that he would have informed us if anything had happened to prevent him from accomplishing what he had set his heart upon.

CHAPTER VII.

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY.

ACTS xviii. 23—xxi. 16. A.D. 54-58.

AFTER a short stay in Antioch, Paul again set out on an evangelistic tour, intending to fulfil his promise of visiting Ephesus. Of the early portion of this journey we have little or no information ; we

60. Paul sets out on his third journey.

are simply told that he went through the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. We have had occasion to remark on this statement, that it plainly implies that the churches in these provinces were planted previous to this visit ; and, from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, we learn that one object of the present journey was to set on foot that collection for the saints in Jerusalem which occupied so much of his thoughts during this whole journey (1 Cor. xvi. 1 ; Rom. xv. 24-28). There is little doubt but he found working that leaven of Judaism which afterwards produced such disastrous results, and which led him to write the sharpest of all his letters—that to the Galatians. Passing through these countries, he directed his steps towards Ephesus, approaching it from the landward side. Before his arrival in that town, and while he was engaged in what are called the upper coasts,—that is, the region where the tableland of Anatolia begins to slope gradually and gently down to the Archipelago,—Ephesus received a visit from one whose history, though briefly sketched, is full of interest.

This was Apollos, a native of Alexandria in Egypt. Save Jerusalem, no city in the world possessed so many Jewish inhabitants as Alexandria, where they had been induced to

settle by the founder of the city, and his successors, the Ptolemies. In no city had there been such a commingling of the three main elements of culture then prevailing — the Jewish, the Eastern, and the Grecian — the attempted fusion of which exerted a very important influence on the Christian Church. This Apollos was an eloquent man, and well versed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He was of an ardent and enthusiastic temperament, and being instructed in the way of the Lord, he spake and taught accurately the things of the Lord Jesus, in so far as his knowledge went. The extent of his knowledge is indicated by the limit—he knew only the baptism of John. Combining this expression with the statement that he was instructed in the way of the Lord, we gather that he was acquainted with the main facts in the history of Jesus, and believed him to be the Messiah; but was ignorant of the events of the day of Pentecost, and of Christian baptism, and of all which it signifies and seals. On his arrival in Ephesus, he began to speak boldly in the synagogue—a privilege to which his standing as a Jew would entitle him; and his eloquence and fervour would seem to have overborne all opposition, for we are not told that any attempt was made to silence him. Aquila and Priscilla, themselves Jews, hearing his eloquent expositions of the Old Testament Scriptures, and observing the fervent zeal with which he taught the way of the Lord, took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. This is the first intimation given us that these two were Christians; and from the probability, amounting almost to certainty, that they owed their conversion to their connection with Paul, we may feel well assured that Apollos was taught that gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles (Gal. ii. 2). After some stay in Ephesus, Apollos was desirous of crossing to Corinth; and to secure for him a cordial welcome, the Ephesian brethren gave him letters of recommendation to the Church in Corinth, where he proved himself a most valuable coadjutor in the struggle with the Jews, which continued to harass and disturb the Corinthian disciples. His great eloquence, and his intimate

61. Apollos arrives in Ephesus —crosses to Corinth.

knowledge of the Scriptures, enabled him to argue down * the Jews, and to show convincingly that Jesus was the Christ. When the Church in Corinth became, unfortunately, a prey to factions, we learn that one party enrolled themselves as followers of Apollos, and endeavoured to set him up as a rival to Paul. (1 Cor. i. 12 ; iii. 5). Those who acted in this way were, in all probability, the seekers after wisdom, of whom the apostle speaks, who would naturally be attracted to Apollos by the splendour of his eloquence. It is evident that Paul acquitted Apollos himself of having fomented these party squabbles. Indeed, it would seem that as soon as Apollos became aware of them, he left the town, and positively refused to return, although earnestly solicited by Paul to do so (1 Cor. xvi. 12). Once only after this does the name of Apollos occur in the New Testament. Writing to Titus, Paul tells him to bring Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting to them (Titus iii. 13).

While Apollos was labouring successfully in Corinth, Paul arrived in Ephesus, the capital of Proconsular Asia, and one of the most celebrated of ancient cities. It is probable that he took up his abode with Aquila and Priscilla, who were still in the town (1 Cor. xvi. 19), and with whom he again wrought, ministering with his own hands to his own necessities, and to them that were with him (Acts xx. 34). His stay in the city of Ephesus embraced a period of three years (Acts xx. 31); and among his companions during this residence, in addition to Aquila, Priscilla, Timothy, and Apollos, whose names have already occurred, we find mention made of Erastus (Acts xix. 22), and of Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, who are termed his companions in travel (Acts xix. 29); and finally of Sosthenes, whom he joins with himself in the introduction to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written from Ephesus on the occasion of this visit (1 Cor. i. 1). Surrounded by this group of faithful fellow-labourers, the apostle commenced his work in Ephesus — a work which prospered beyond even his most

62. *Paul arrives in Ephesus — baptises twelve disciples.*

sanguine expectations. Immediately on his arrival in the town, he was brought into contact with a small company of disciples, believers in the Lord Jesus, but whose standpoint in regard to Christianity corresponded to what we have seen was the position of Apollos when he first came to Ephesus. They had, like him, been baptised simply into the baptism of John ; but had never heard of that baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, of which John had foretold. On learning this, Paul explained unto them the true nature of John's baptism, and reminded them that John himself taught the people that they should believe on Him who should come after him. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, anticipatory of the kingdom of God to come ; while Christian baptism was a baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, as having come and made an end of sin by his death on the cross. On hearing this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus ; and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied.

According to his invariable custom, Paul began his regular

63. General account of Paul's labours in Ephesus. evangelistic work among his own countrymen. He spent about three months in reasoning with the Jews on Sabbath day ; but his success was

not great. The Jews of Ephesus exhibited the same bitter enmity to the truth as their brethren had done in all the other towns where the apostle had laboured. They endeavoured to prejudice the minds of the people against Christianity, and in this way to arrest the progress of the gospel. This course of opposition induced the apostle to adopt the step which he had followed in Corinth ; and accordingly we read that he departed from the synagogue, separating the disciples, and forming them into a distinct body by themselves. The Church henceforward met for the space of two years in the school of one Tyrannus.* During this period of comparatively undisturbed tranquillity, the apostle laboured so incessantly that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. He was not

* Probably a Gentile—a teacher of philosophy, whose rooms the apostle may have rented ; or Tyrannus himself may have been a convert.

content with his public teaching ; he visited his converts in their own homes (Acts xx. 20), and kept back nothing that was profitable unto them, never shunning to declare unto them the whole counsel of God (Acts xx. 27). The great subject of his preaching was repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xx. 21). Whilst thus labouring, he was chargeable to no man ; for, as in Corinth, so in Ephesus, he had resolved to make the gospel of Christ without charge (1 Cor. ix. 18), and his own hands had ministered to his necessities (Acts xx. 34). His labours during these two years had not been free from trial and danger ; he had served the Lord with many tears and temptations, which befell him by the lying in wait of the Jews (Acts xx. 19).

Whilst such was the general tenor of the apostle's labours in Ephesus, we learn from the history that his work was marked by several features which communicate to his residence in this town an interest peculiar and striking. Ephesus was famous for its charms and amulets, which went under the name of "Ephesian Letters," and consisted of bits of parchment on which were engraved the words which surrounded the image of Diana. These charms, worn on the person, were supposed to possess remarkable virtue, and were eagerly coveted, becoming an important article of merchandise. To exalt the apostle in the eyes of the Ephesians, and with special reference to these pretended charms, God enabled him to perform miracles quite out of the usual order of things.* Handkerchiefs and aprons which had been in contact with his body, were taken to the sick and those possessed with evil spirits, and they were cured. These striking cures, performed in so unusual a way, soon produced many imitators. Many of the Jews were professed exorcists, and they were in the habit of wandering from country to country in the exercise of their calling. Observing the remarkable success which attended Paul, and judging rightly enough that his power was in some way or other derived from Jesus, they imagined that all that was necessary to secure, on their part, the same results, was

64. *Paul works
special miracles
in Ephesus : their
effects.*

* *Δυνάμεις οὐ τὰς τυχούσας*,—miracles not of an ordinary kind.

to call over the possessed the name of Jesus. But as, among all pretenders, success was thought to be dependent upon the use of the exact formula prescribed, and as the name of Jesus was a very common one, these exorcists, to avoid mistake, invoked that Jesus whom Paul preached. Among others who had recourse to this formula, were the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests resident in Ephesus. On one occasion, when two* of them had thus adjured an evil spirit, it made answer: “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?” The demoniac, in a paroxym of fury, immediately leaped upon them, and compelled them to flee from the house, wounded, and with the loss of their outer garment, which had been torn off them in the struggle. This fact becoming noised abroad produced a deep impression on the minds of the Ephesians, and tended much to exalt the estimation in which the Christians were held. Both Jews and Greeks were filled with a wholesome fear of tampering with a name that was so powerful; and, as a consequence, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. Nor was this impression confined to unbelievers. Many of the Christians still continued to practise curious arts; and, even after their conversion, had retained the books containing the formulæ, or receipts, according to which the charms or spells were to be performed. But the case of Sceva’s sons convinced them all that such practices were inconsistent with the profession of faith in Christ; and they not only made confession of their deeds, but, to remove temptation out of their way, they brought the books themselves and publicly committed them to the flames. And this was no light sacrifice, when we consider the price of books in those times. The value of the books thus burned was estimated at 50,000 pieces of silver—a sum equivalent to about £1700 of our money. “So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.”

From several passages in the letters to the Corinthians, it is evident that, some time during the stay in Ephesus, the

* The correct reading in Acts xix. 16 seems to be *ἀμφοτέρων* and not *αὐτῶν*. It is altogether probable that, while the seven were exorcists, only two were engaged in this case.

apostle had paid a hurried visit to Corinth, which is not recorded in the Acts.* Considering the proximity of the two towns, and the unsettled state of the Corinthian Church, such a journey would be altogether probable; and the passages referred to, and others of a like nature, seem to set the matter

65. *Paul pays an unrecorded visit to Corinth, and writes a letter which is not extant.*

beyond doubt. That Luke does not describe such a journey is by no means remarkable, for he entirely omits many journeys of the apostle. It would likewise appear that he had written a letter to the Corinthian Church which has not been preserved (1 Cor. v. 9).† We can gather somewhat of the contents of this lost letter from the passage in which it is mentioned. It had reference, among other things, to the sin of fornication, for which Corinth enjoyed a bad pre-eminence, even in that degenerate age. We know from the First Epistle to the Corinthians that the warnings were needed. But the visit and the letter had both failed to bring the Corinthian Church to any adequate sense of the guilt of this sin, or to heal those divisions which had unhappily broken out, and which seemed destined to rend the Church in pieces. Accordingly the apostle purposed to visit Macedonia and Achaia again in person; and, after carrying to Jerusalem the collection which was being gathered in the various churches, it was his intention to see Rome. But, as the work in Ephesus was important, he was unwilling to leave it immediately, and so he continued in Asia for a season, sending into Macedonia Timothy and Erastus. The purport of this mission is explained for us in 1 Cor. iv. 17, where Paul writes: "I have sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." It was uncertain, however, whether Timothy might be able to reach Corinth (1 Cor. xvi. 10); and shortly after his

* 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21; xiii. 1, where he expressly says: "This is the third time I am coming to you;" whereas, in so far as the history in the Acts relates, the visit thus referred to was the second.

† It has been attempted to show that the expression in this verse refers to the first part of the letter in which it occurs. But this is impossible, inasmuch as no such command as that spoken of is found in the first part of what is now the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

departure from Ephesus, circumstances occurred which induced the apostle to write again to the Corinthians.

Intelligence reached him from members of the household of

66. Paul writes the First Epistle to the Corinthians. Chloe (1 Cor. i. 11), and common report verified the truth of this intelligence (1 Cor. v. 1), that matters in Corinth had come to such a pass that

the strong hand of apostolic authority was necessary for their settlement. Divisions had sprung up, and parties had been formed, each holding by its favourite teacher (1 Cor. i. 10-12). Sins of a most shameless nature, from which even the heathen instinctively shrank, were openly tolerated, and the guilty person was retained in the communion of the Church (1 Cor. v.). Quarrels and law-suits had become common, and the brethren were in the habit of dragging each other before the heathen tribunals (1 Cor. vi.). Great abuses had appeared in connection with their love-feasts and the celebration of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. xi. 17-34); and heresies were beginning to show themselves, especially in connection with the doctrine of the resurrection, which some were openly impugning (1 Cor. xv.). About the time that this sad and disheartening information reached him, a deputation from the Corinthian Church, consisting probably of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Cor. xvi. 17), arrived in Ephesus, bearing a letter in which the apostle's opinion was asked on various matters which had agitated the Church (1 Cor. vii. 1). These matters had reference to marriage (1 Cor. vii.); as to how far it was lawful to partake of meats offered to idols, and to associate with unbelievers (1 Cor. viii.); as to the position of women in the Church (1 Cor. xi. 1-16); and as to the proper correlation of the various spiritual gifts with which God had endowed his Church (1 Cor. xii.-xiv.). To answer these questions, and to settle, if possible, the differences which had arisen, was the object of Paul in writing what we term his First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was despatched from Ephesus shortly after the departure of Timothy, and towards the close of the apostle's stay in that town. The bearers of this letter were, in all probability, the deputation we have already named, accompanied apparently

by Titus, who was instructed, after ascertaining the effect which the letter should produce, to return through Macedonia and meet the apostle in Troas (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13).*

After the despatch of the letter, events took place in Ephesus which drove Paul from the town sooner than he had anticipated. Ephesus contained a magnificent temple of Diana, which was reckoned one of the wonders of the world. In this temple was religiously preserved a rude image of the goddess Diana, which was fabled to have fallen from heaven, and the possession of which was bound up with the very existence of the city. Although the temple was in Ephesus, it was the common property of all the towns of Proconsular Asia; and the guardianship of it was reckoned a high honour and privilege. Ephesus was so honoured on the present occasion, as we learn from the town-clerk's address to the mob.† So famous, indeed, and so widespread was the worship of the Ephesian Diana, that the manufacture of small models of the temple in silver, which might be used by those who could not attend personally in Ephesus, had become an important branch of trade, and gave employment to a very considerable number of hands. At certain seasons the sale of these shrines was greater than at others. Annual games, in honour of Diana, were held in the various cities of Asia. These games were presided over by officers elected annually for that purpose, and called Asiarchs.‡ From the presence in Ephesus of these Asiarchs on this occasion (Acts xix. 31), it is altogether probable that the games were then being celebrated in that city. Ephesus, moreover, was an assize town, in which periodical courts were held; and there is strong reason to believe that the assizes were then in session.§ These

* In addition to the object mentioned in the text, we learn from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that Titus was charged, on this occasion, to set in order all matters relating to the collection for the saints in Jerusalem—a work in which he showed himself particularly active (2 Cor. viii. ix.).

† “Who is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper (*νεωκόπος* =sweeper, or, as some say, keeper or warden) of the great goddess Diana?” (Acts xix. 35).

‡ In the English version translated “Chief of Asia.”

§ This is rendered extremely probable from the town-clerk's statement: “The law is open (*ἀγοραῖοι ἀγονται* =the assizes are being held), and there are deputies” (Acts xix. 38).

67. *Riot of
Demetrius, and
speech of the
town-clerk.*

two causes—the celebration of the games, and the holding of the assizes—would combine to attract multitudes to Ephesus; and the manufacturers of the shrines might, in the circumstances, cherish the expectation that their goods would command a ready sale. But in this expectation they were doomed to be disappointed. So effectual had been the proclamation of the gospel, and so many in Asia had turned from idols to serve the living God, that the sale of the shrines had been very seriously affected;—a result brought about, not by open and violent attacks upon the worship of Diana (for it was admitted that the Christians had not been blasphemers of that goddess), but by the faithful exhibition of the truth in love. The falling off in the sales seems to have very seriously affected a master tradesman named Demetrius, who assembled the workmen of like occupation, and in an address skilfully adapted to wound their religious pride, told them, “that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands: so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.” This address had the desired effect—the audience were filled with wrath, and signified their respect for their goddess by crying out, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Excitement is contagious. Demetrius had calculated on this, nor was he disappointed. The whole city was thrown into confusion, and popular feeling ran strong against the Christians. Having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, natives of Macedonia, two of Paul’s companions in travel, the excited multitude rushed with them into the theatre.* Paul would have joined his two friends in the theatre, had he not been prevented by the disciples and certain Asiarchs who were friendly to him, and who, knowing well the temper of an Ephesian mob, urged him

* Ancient theatres were very different from those we see in this country. They were seldom roofed in, and were capable of containing many thousand spectators. They were the usual places of resort on occasions like the present.

not to trust himself in their hands. In the theatre all was confusion. Discordant cries proceeded from all parts of the building, for the majority of those present were entirely ignorant of the cause which had brought them together. In the midst of the excitement, an incident occurred which served only to increase it. Some of the multitude seized a person of the name of Alexander,* and endeavoured to pass him to the front, the Jews readily lending a hand in this business, with the view, apparently, of diverting the anger of the crowd from themselves, and turning it upon the Christians—Alexander probably being a convert from Judaism. If we suppose Alexander to have been an unbelieving Jew, then the object of his countrymen in putting him forward would, in all likelihood, be, that he might explain to the assemblage that Judaism was not identical with Christianity, and that the Jews were not responsible for the injury done to the trade of the silversmiths. But whatever may have been their object, the very appearance of Alexander, whose Jewish dress and physiognomy could not be mistaken, had the effect of rousing the meeting to a pitch of frenzy. Paul, the chief representative of the Christians, was a Jew; Christianity was associated in their minds with Judaism: and so they would listen to no explanations, but for two hours kept shouting out, in one continued roar, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” Having at last exhausted themselves, they were induced to listen to the town-clerk, † who, by a temperate and highly skilful address, succeeded in getting them quietly dismissed. He artfully flattered their pride, by reminding them that all the world knew that Ephesus was the keeper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from heaven, and that the very notoriety of the fact ought to keep them from doing anything rashly. The men against whom their clamours were

* In the Epistles to Timothy, both of which are supposed to have been sent to Ephesus, this name occurs twice (1 Tim. i. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14), but we cannot affirm that these two names refer to the same person, or that either of them is identical with the Alexander of the Acts. The epithet “coppersmith” is remarkable in connection with the account in the Acts.

† *Γραμματεὺς*, recorder; an officer whose duty it was to register all decrees, and to preserve the public documents of the town.

directed had been guilty of no offence against the national worship, and if Demetrius, or any of the tradesmen, had any valid charge to bring against any man, he knew what course to adopt. There were regular assizes and judges to dispense justice. If the matter was one affecting the whole city, it would be only reasonable that it should be determined in an assembly called in the regular way,* and not in a meeting such as the present manifestly was. And then, reserving his strongest argument to the close, he suggested the possibility of an investigation on the part of the Roman authorities into the cause of the uproar; and as it was well known that meetings not duly convened were highly offensive to them, the issue of any such investigation might be anything but favourable to the city. With these words he dismissed the assembly.

Immediately after the uproar, Paul deemed it prudent to

68. Paul leaves Ephesus and goes by Troas into Macedonia. depart from Ephesus, and, having held a farewell meeting with the brethren, he left the town and proceeded in the direction of Macedonia. His original intention had been to go from Ephesus to Corinth, and thence pass northwards into Macedonia (2 Cor. i. 15, 16). But he was unwilling to visit Corinth in the meantime. He had recently sent them a letter, in which he spoke in no measured terms of the divisions then prevalent in the Church, and of the gross sins openly tolerated among its members; and he was desirous of learning what effect this letter had produced before trusting himself to visit them personally (2 Cor. i. 23, 24; xii. 20, 21; xiii. 1-3). The Corinthians attributed this change of plan to fickleness on the apostle's part; and some of them went so far as to assert that it was a consciousness of weakness that prevented him from paying the promised visit (2 Cor. x. 9-11). These charges he effectually disposed of in his Second Epistle to the Church of Corinth; and, sensible of the purity of his own motives, he deferred his visit, and on leaving Ephesus proceeded to Troas,

* Ἐν τῇ ἐννόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ—Ephesus, like Thessalonica, was a free city, and had its own magistrates and its own assemblies. It was independent of the provincial governor “deputy,” for Asia was a proconsular province.

where he expected to meet with Titus, and to receive intelligence of the state of the Corinthian Church. But Titus had not arrived ; the apostle, as we have formerly mentioned, having in all probability left Ephesus earlier than had been agreed upon. He was grievously disappointed in not meeting with Titus ; and though a door was opened unto him of the Lord to preach the gospel in Troas, his mind was too agitated regarding the nature of the intelligence which Titus might bring, to enable him to embrace the opportunity thus presented. He had no rest in his spirit, and taking his leave of them in Troas he went into Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13).

On his arrival in Macedonia, Paul visited the various churches in that district, and gave them much exhortation (Acts xx. 2) ; but he himself continued subject to the most gloomy forebodings regarding his Corinthian converts. His flesh had no rest ; he was troubled on every side ; without were fightings, within were fears (2 Cor. vii. 5). But his sadness and his anxiety were dispelled by the coming of Titus, who brought him the most gratifying and satisfactory intelligence as to the effect which his first letter had produced in Corinth (2 Cor. vii. 6-16). It had been the means of leading the Church to repentance so deep and so sincere, and they had carried his instructions out so fully, that he deemed it necessary to remind them that it was their duty to confirm their love towards the incestuous person, who had brought such scandal on the Church, but who had now been brought to a right mind (2 Cor. ii. 1-11). Titus was also able to report that the Corinthians had taken up the subject of the collection with great forwardness of mind, and so zealously that many others had been provoked by their example (2 Cor. ix. 1, 2). All this was like cold water to the thirsty soul of the apostle ; and in the fulness of his heart he wrote from Macedonia* the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he poured out his gratitude for the consolation which the intelligence brought by Titus had given him. While such had been the general effect produced in Corinth by the first

69. *Paul writes
the Second Epistle
to the Corinthians.*

* And we may well believe from the town of Philippi.

epistle, it is evident that a few still continued their course of opposition, which assumed more and more a personal aspect. They denied Paul's apostolic authority, charged him with fickleness, and drew invidious comparisons between the boldness of his letters and his bodily presence, which was weak, and his speech, which was contemptible (2 Cor. x. 10). To such the apostle wrote in strains of indignant rebuke, and gave them distinctly to understand that if he came among them he would not spare them (2 Cor. xiii. 2). The epistle, containing at once the tenderest expressions of affection and the sternest denunciations against the evils which still troubled the Church, was sent to Corinth by the hands of Titus and other two brethren, whose names are not recorded, but who, from the way in which the apostle speaks of them, were persons of consequence in the Church (2 Cor. viii. 18-24).*

In order to allow time for the warnings contained in his

70. Paul writes second letter to produce their due effect, the *the Epistles to the* apostle put off his journey to Corinth for some *Galatians and to* time, and seems to have paid a visit to Illyricum *the Romans.*

(Rom xv. 19). At length he left Macedonia and went into Greece, where he abode for three months. We may feel assured that a considerable portion, if not the whole of this time was spent in Corinth, or its immediate neighbourhood. We have no account in the Acts of the reception he met with in Corinth, nor of his doings during his three months' residence in the district. He was not, however, idle; for in addition to setting in order the affairs of the Church in Corinth (1 Cor. xi. 34), he wrote on this occasion one, and that the greatest, if not two, of his epistles. These were the Epistle to the Romans and that to the Galatians.† The Judaising teachers,

* It has been thought that these two brethren were Tychicus and Trophimus, who certainly journeyed with Paul from Corinth when he returned into Asia (Acts xx. 4). Consult Smith's Dictionary of the Bible under these names.

† It is altogether uncertain where this epistle was written. It supplies few hints which can guide us. Indeed, the only distinct hint is the word "soon" in chapter i. 6; and the question turns upon the time when the Judaising teachers commenced operations in Galatia. For a full discussion of the whole matter, the reader is referred to Conybeare and Howson's Life and Letters of St. Paul. From its similarity to the Epistle to the Romans, we shall assume that it was written about the same time, and from Corinth.

who dogged Paul's footsteps wherever he went, had, shortly after his departure from Galatia (Acts xviii. 23), made their appearance on the scene, and, working on the emotional and fickle Galatians, had induced numbers of them to allow themselves to be circumcised. They endeavoured to depreciate Paul, by representing him as inferior to the other apostles, and as one who derived his authority, not directly from the Lord Jesus, but from the twelve; and wished it to be inferred that if in any point his teaching ran counter to that of the Church in Jerusalem, the converts were bound to obey those who had been solemnly set apart to the apostolic office by our Lord during his ministry on earth. They likewise insinuated that Paul himself was not consistent in his mode of dealing with this question of circumcision, but that he made mere expediency the rule for determining when circumcision should be insisted on and when not. By these means they completely alienated the affections of the Galatians from their spiritual father, and subverted the souls of a large proportion of the believers. Intelligence of this state of matters reached the apostle in Corinth, and he was wounded to the quick. Taking up his pen, and abandoning his usual practice of employing an amanuensis, he wrote with his own hand (Gal. vi. 11)* a letter, in which he gave vent to his surprise and indignation in terms which contrast strongly with the general style of his other letters, and in which he states, in no ambiguous language, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). In the Epistle to the Galatians we have in embryo the substance of that magnificent argument which, more fully elaborated, he embodied in the Epistle to the Romans. He had been long anxious to visit Rome, but circumstances had hitherto prevented him from gratifying this long-cherished desire (Rom. xv. 22-25). But during his residence in Corinth, Phebe, a deaconess of the Church of Cenchrea, had occasion to

* Where the expression—"how large a letter," is, literally, "with how large letters," and seems to refer, not to the size of the epistle, but to the actual handwriting, which, from his defective vision, was probably of a larger size than was usual in that age.

visit Rome on some matter of private business (Rom. xvi. 1, 2), and the apostle embraced the opportunity of sending to the Christians there that letter, which, more than any other, bears the impress of the mind of Paul, and which has been to the Church in all ages the richest inheritance of the apostolic age.*

Having, according to his promise, ordered aright what he

*71. Paul leaves
Greece and re-
turns to Asia.
Raises Eutychus.* found amiss in the Corinthian Church, and having despatched the two letters we have just alluded to, the apostle purposed to sail into Syria from Cenchrea. But the machinations of the Jews prevented him from carrying this purpose into effect, and he was compelled to return through Macedonia. The collection for the saints in Judea was finished, and from the list of brethren who accompanied Paul into Asia† on this occasion, we may gather that the various churches in which contributions had been made had nominated deputies for the purpose of carrying the offering to Jerusalem (1 Cor. xvi. 3, 4).‡ These deputies, Sopater from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia,§ assembled in Philippi, along with Timothy and Luke, the latter of whom joins the apostle after an interval of some years.|| Paul, finding a favourable opportunity, sent the deputies on before to Troas, whilst Luke and himself remained

* That the epistle was written from Corinth on this occasion is evident from several passages in it; compare particularly chapter xv. 25, 26, with what we learn from the Epistles to the Corinthians regarding the collection for the saints. See also chapter xvi. 23, compared with 1 Cor. i. 14, from which it appears that Gaius was a resident in Corinth. The mention of Phebe also bears in the same direction.

† This need not mean that they went no farther than Asia. Some of them, we know, accompanied him to Jerusalem. Trophimus (Acts xxi. 29) and Aristarchus (Acts xxvii. 2) are distinctly mentioned as being with him in Judea. The probability is that all the deputies named went to Jerusalem.

‡ Where instead of, “When I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by *your* letters, them will I send,” &c.; read, “When I come, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters,” &c. If the apostle cannot accompany the Corinthian deputies to Jerusalem, he will give them letters of introduction to the Church there; but if he can accompany them, these letters will not be necessary. This rendering, which simply requires the change of a comma, makes the passage clear.

§ That is, Ephesus. In Acts xxi. 29, Trophimus is called an Ephesian; and from Eph. vi. 22, we infer that Tychicus was so also.

|| The change in the form of the narrative indicates Luke’s presence. The “we” reappears, and continues to the close of the book. It will be remembered that Luke was left in Philippi at the close of Paul’s first visit to that town. We have no means of ascertaining how he was occupied during this interval.

in Philippi until the close of the feast of the Passover; his stay in Europe on this occasion having extended from about Pentecost to the Passover—a period of about nine months. (Compare 1 Cor. xvi. 8, with Acts xx. 6.) Starting from Philippi, and taking ship at Neapolis, the apostle, in company with Luke, after a voyage occupying five days, joined his companions at Troas, where they remained seven days. The last day of their stay was the Lord's day, and, in the evening, a love-feast, accompanied, as was usual, with the celebration of the Lord's supper, took place in an upper chamber, which was lighted up for the occasion with many lights. Previous to the feast, Paul addressed the brethren at considerable length, continuing his speech until midnight. At that time an accident happened to Eutychus, one of the audience, who was seated on the window-seat. Overpowered by the heat of the many lights, he fell into a deep sleep, and at length, as Paul continued his discourse, he was so completely overcome that he fell down from the third story, in which the place of meeting was, and was taken up dead. Paul immediately stopped his discourse, and went down to the room where the body lay, and, after embracing it,* said to the bystanders, "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." Having performed this miracle, he returned to the upper chamber, where the feast, which had been interrupted by the accident, was now celebrated. After supper, he again addressed the disciples, and, having spoken until the morning began to break, he took his leave of them. By this time, Eutychus, who would seem to have been left in the room where Paul restored him to life, was so far recovered as to be able to be brought in to the meeting, and the sight of him caused no small joy in the minds of the brethren.

From Troas, the journey to Jerusalem is given with much minuteness, Luke, as we have seen, forming one of the company. Paul, for reasons unknown to us, performed the journey from Troas to Assos on foot, and there joined his companions on board the ship. From Assos they sailed to Mitylene, a town in

72. *Paul arrives in Miletus—his address to the Ephesian elders.*

* Compare 2 Kings iv. 34.

the island of Lesbos, and, passing Chios, they put into Samos ; but their stay there was short, for the same evening they came to and tarried at Trogylgium. The day following they arrived at Miletus. As Paul was exceedingly desirous of reaching Jerusalem by Pentecost, he determined not to visit Ephesus, lest by so doing he should run the risk of losing the ship in which they were sailing.* But, as the vessel had to make a short stay in Miletus, he sent word to the elders of Ephesus of his being in the neighbourhood, and requested them to come to him to Miletus. This summons was cheerfully obeyed ; and on their arrival, on the very day on which the vessel was to resume her voyage, he addressed them in words full of the most tender affection, and breathing his earnest desire that they might prove themselves worthy of the position which God in his providence had assigned them in his Church. After reminding them how he had conducted himself among them during his three years' residence in their town ; how, amid manifold trials and temptations, he had served the Lord in all humility of mind, and had kept back nothing which was profitable to them (Acts xx. 18-21)—he informs them that his present prospects were gloomy enough. He was going to Jerusalem, not knowing what was in store for him, save only that he was warned on all hands by the Holy Ghost that bonds and imprisonment awaited him. The thought of this in no way moved him—his great desire being to finish his course with joy and to accomplish the work to which God had appointed him (Acts xx. 22-24). It was extremely uncertain whether he should ever have an opportunity of seeing them again ; † and, in taking his farewell of them, he calls them to witness that he was pure from the blood of all men, for he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God ; and reminds them of their increased responsibility, now that he was about to

* This seems much more probable than that the vessel was at his disposal, and that his reason for not visiting Ephesus was any fear of being detained by outbreaks similar to that raised by Demetrius. The word "determined" does not at all imply that he could have detained the vessel at Ephesus, if he had been so inclined.

† Acts xx. 25. We shall have an opportunity afterwards of considering this verse, which has given rise to so much controversy.

leave them. They would require to take heed unto themselves and to the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers;* and all the more that, in a short time, heresies would spring up among themselves, and false teachers would come among them from without, and this would render vigilance on their part doubly necessary (Acts xx. 25-31). Having solemnly commended them to God, and having appealed to the disinterested motives which had animated him in his labours in their midst, he closes this deeply touching and pathetic address by one of those words of the Lord Jesus, which, though not recorded by any of the evangelists, is so pervaded by the very spirit of Christ's teaching as to leave no doubt that we have in it one of those many sayings which were continually falling from the lips of Him who spake as never man spake: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 32-35). At the conclusion of the address, the whole company knelt in prayer, which was offered up by Paul. The parting was a very affecting one. The Ephesian elders were completely overcome, and could not restrain their tears, which fell fast as, in accordance with Eastern habits, they embraced the apostle and kissed him. What constituted the chief element in their sorrow was the statement that they should see his face no more. The elders accompanied him to the ship, and it was with difficulty that he could tear himself away from them,† so great was their grief in parting for the last time, as it then seemed, from one who had been their spiritual father in Christ Jesus.

Leaving Miletus with a fair wind, they arrived at Coos, and on the day following at Rhodes, from whence they ran to Patara. There they left the vessel in which they had hitherto sailed, and which, in all probability, was to pursue the remainder of her voyage along the coast; and, finding one bound straight for Phenicia, they embarked on board her, and immediately put to sea. Cutting

* *Ἐπισκόπους*—BISHOPS—which is always the translation of the word in other passages. But it would have been awkward to have so rendered it here, as it would prove that one church had *several* bishops, and so, somewhat disingenuously we must say, it was rendered OVERSEERS.

73. Paul arrives in Jerusalem.

† *Ἀποσπασθέντας*, Acts xxi. 1, to tear from.

across the angle of the Levant, they sighted Cyprus, which they passed on the west side ; and, holding on their course to Syria, put into Tyre, where the vessel was to discharge cargo. Immediately on landing, Paul and his companions sought out the disciples who were in Tyre, and remained with them during the seven days occupied in unloading the ship. Some of the disciples would seem to have been prophets, who, taught by the Spirit, attempted, but without success, to dissuade Paul from proceeding to Jerusalem. When the time for departure arrived, the whole body of Christians in Tyre, with their wives and children, accompanied the apostle outside the city, and, on their arrival on the shore, they all knelt down and engaged in prayer. Having taken a cordial farewell of one another, Paul embarked on board ship, whilst the Tyrian Christians returned to their homes. The vessel did not proceed farther than Ptolemais, and there, accordingly, the voyage by sea ended. Having disembarked, they remained one day in Ptolemais, and then went on foot to Cæsarea, accomplishing the journey in one day. They found a cordial welcome in the house of Philip the Evangelist—one of the seven original deacons, who, with his family of four grown-up daughters, had for a considerable time been settled in Cæsarea,* and was, in all probability, the pastor of the Christian congregation in that town. Their stay in Cæsarea lasted for several days, during which there came down from Judea, a prophet named Agabus, who, by one of those symbolic actions peculiar to the Jews, intimated distinctly that bonds and imprisonment awaited the apostle in Jerusalem. Taking Paul's girdle, and binding himself with it, Agabus announced that so should the Jews in Jerusalem bind the owner of the girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. This announcement produced the most lively anxiety in the minds of all who heard it, and with tears they besought Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But all their entreaties were in vain. His mind was made up, and to Jerusalem he must go. We are not to suppose that it was anything like mere blind obstinacy that actuated the apostle in this resolve. It is to be noticed that no

* See Acts viii. 40.

prophetic utterance forbade him to go up. The prophets simply foretold what would happen to him in Jerusalem. That bonds and imprisonment awaited him, as these prophets announced, Paul knew right well; but he too was a prophet, and the Holy Ghost speaking in him told him that Jerusalem was his goal. Even those who were at first most urgent against his going, were obliged to see in Paul's determination the undoubted indication of the mind of Christ, and so they ceased their entreaties, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." After a considerable stay in Cæsarea, the brethren having made the necessary arrangements for the journey,* set out for Jerusalem, accompanied by certain disciples from Cæsarea, who brought them to the house of Mnason, a native of Cyprus, and now an old disciple, where they were to lodge during their residence in Jerusalem.

* Ἐπισκευασάμενοι. English ver. : "We took up our carriages,"—where "carriages" means burdens, or knapsacks, as we should say. For a similar use of the word, see Judges xviii. 21.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAUL'S ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT
IN CÆSAREA.

ACTS XXI. 17—XXVI. A.D. 58-60.

ON their arrival in Jerusalem, Paul and the deputies from the

74. Paul's reception by the Church in Jerusalem.

Gentile churches received a cordial welcome from the brethren there. So far, his earnest prayer had been answered, and his service, which he had for Jerusalem, was accepted of the saints (Rom. xv. 31). On the day after his arrival, at a meeting with James and all the elders of the church in Jerusalem, he gave, as he had done on a previous occasion (Acts xv. 12), a minute and detailed account of all things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. The intelligence could not fail to cause lively joy among the elders ; but their joy was mingled with misgivings as to the reception which the great body of the Christian Jews might accord to the apostle. Reports had been industriously circulated, probably by his old enemies the Judaising teachers, that Paul had been in the habit of advising the Jews of the dispersion to neglect circumcision and the other religious observances of the Mosaic law. Such unscrupulous and persistent enemies as these Judaisers were, would have no difficulty in bringing forward what appeared to them convincing proof of these assertions. In Paul's published writings, particularly in his Epistles to the Galatians and the Romans, he had most unequivocally taught that, in the matter of a sinner's acceptance with God, both Jews and Gentiles were exactly on a level ; but he had never discountenanced the observance of the Mosaic ritual by Jews, except when he found that the observance of it was made a substitute for faith. Overlooking, however, this distinction, these teachers perverted the apostle's words, and caused him to be looked upon with suspicion by the many thousands of Jews who believed. The elders, knowing that such suspicions

existed, and convinced that as soon as the news of Paul's arrival in Jerusalem had spread abroad, a crowd animated by no friendly feelings to him, would assemble, and anxious to avoid raising an angry discussion on a point which had been virtually settled long ago, proposed a plan whereby the scruples of the Jewish Christians might be satisfied, and their suspicions laid at rest. This was none other than that Paul should himself submit to one of the observances of the law, whereby all men might understand that the charges brought against him were nothing, but that he himself walked orderly, and kept the law. There were then present in Jerusalem four brethren who had taken a Nazarite vow upon them, and the elders proposed that Paul should join himself with them, take the vow upon him, and bear the expense of the sacrifices which always accompanied the accomplishment of the vow (Num. vi. 14, 15), which was signified by the shaving of the head (Num. vi. 18).* To prevent the possibility of misunderstanding, the elders were careful to explain that their views regarding the binding nature of the law upon the Gentiles had undergone no change, but that they still adhered to the decision agreed upon at the meeting held in Jerusalem to discuss this very point, at which Paul himself had been present (Acts xv.). To a request like this, preferred in such a spirit, Paul could offer no objection. It had been his uniform practice to become a Jew unto the Jews, that he might gain the Jews (1 Cor. ix. 20); and accordingly he most cheerfully assented to the proposal of the elders. On the very next day after this interview, Paul purified himself, and, entering with the men into the temple, intimated to the priests that the period of their purification would expire in seven days, when they would present themselves at the altar, and offer the prescribed sacrifices. But before this could be done, an event happened which put an arrest upon the apostle's labours, and laid him aside from active duty for many a long day.

When the seven days had nearly expired,† certain Jews

* It was accounted a point of piety among the Jews for the rich to bear the expense of these sacrifices, which is the meaning of the phrase, "Be at charges with them."

† Some see in the expression "seven days" a reference, not to the length of time he was under the vow, but to the feast of Pentecost. The apostle was exceedingly de-

from Asia, and in all likelihood from Ephesus, where the apostle had recently laboured for three years, found him in the temple, and, deeming the opportunity favourable, resolved to visit him with the vengeance which, long cherished, they had hitherto been unable to exact. They immediately seized hold of him, and cried out, "Men of Israel, help: this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."* The last part of this charge was a mere gratuitous assumption. Paul had been seen in the city in company with Trophimus, an Ephesian, and it was insinuated that he had also brought him into the temple. But though this statement was untrue, it served its purpose; for the whole city was moved, and the people ran together, and, laying hold on the apostle, they dragged him out of the temple, the gates of which were immediately shut, either with the view of preventing Paul from seeking an asylum at the horns of the altar, or lest the temple should be polluted by his murder, which seemed imminent. The excited populace commenced to beat the apostle, and would inevitably have killed him, had not assistance come from an unexpected quarter. In the north-west corner of the temple area stood the castle of Antonia, overlooking the temple courts and the city, in which was always stationed a considerable body of Roman troops, ready to quell any riot which might break out among the factious and turbulent Jews. Intelligence of this riot was at once conveyed to Claudius Lysias, the officer in command of the garrison, who, ordering out a body of soldiers with their complement of centurions, forthwith made his appearance on the scene. The sight of the officers and the soldiers led the people to desist

sirous to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts xx. 16), and from a calculation of the time occupied in the voyage from Neapolis, he could have accomplished this. But even supposing the incidents in the text to have occurred during Pentecost, which is altogether probable, the expression "seven days" will more naturally refer to the vow than to the feast. Luke never speaks of Pentecost as "the seven days." The law prescribed no fixed time for the Nazarite vow. The four men evidently had the vow upon them more than seven days—Paul only seven.

* Compare the charges brought against Stephen (Acts vi. 13), in all likelihood by Paul himself.

from their attack on Paul. Claudius, advancing to where he stood, ordered him to be arrested, and to be bound with chains to two soldiers. Having thus secured the supposed offender, he asked the multitude who he was, and of what offence he had been guilty. These questions were more easily put than answered. The whole affair had been the work of a very short time, and the majority of those present were ignorant of the prisoner and of the crimes he had committed. Accordingly, in answer to the questions of Lysias, some cried one thing and some another; and as it was impossible to arrive at the truth in the midst of the confusion that prevailed, orders were given to the soldiers to convey the prisoner to the castle. When these orders were being carried out, the multitude, enraged at being deprived of their victim, followed the soldiers, crying out, "Away with him;" and so great was their violence, that the soldiers were obliged to carry Paul up the steps that led to the castle. On arriving at the top of the stairs, and just as he was about to be led into the castle, Paul, addressing himself to the commanding officer, said, "May I speak unto thee?" Lysias expressed his astonishment at hearing him speak Greek, for he had supposed him to be an Egyptian who some time before this had raised the standard of revolt, and had led out into the wilderness four thousand sicarii.* Paul assured him that he was a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a well-known and important city, and he earnestly besought him for permission to address the people. The permission was given, and Paul, standing on the stairs, and beckoning to the people with his hand, addressed them in the Hebrew tongue. The selection of the Hebrew shows the wonderful self-possession of the man. He knew how the raging multitude below were attached to that language, and how it was entwined in their memory with all their holiest associations; and so, with a rare and admirable capability of adapting himself to circumstances, he made choice of the Hebrew, the sacred accents of which acted like a spell on the excited mob, for on the well-known sound reaching their ears, they were hushed in mute attention.

* See Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX. viii. 6. Sicarii is a kind of technical term equal to cut-throats or assassins.

The apostle's address on this occasion was admirably fitted to reach and impress his audience. He had to meet, and, if possible, to rebut the calumnies which his enemies had been busy circulating against him. He was reported to have apostatised from the Jewish faith, and to have laboured industriously in leading his countrymen to follow his example. He was known as a preacher of the doctrine of the Nazarenes, and as one who had boldly proclaimed the free admission of the Gentiles to equal privileges with the Jews in the new kingdom of God which it was his mission to make known. The transition from this well-known character of his labours to the charge of open apostasy was easy, and his enemies had not been slow in pressing home the charge. To disabuse, if possible, the minds of his hearers of this calumny, was the object he set himself in this address to accomplish. The body of it consists of an account of his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus. He brings this forward as the turning-point in his career, and as that which rendered perfectly consistent the early and the later portions of his life. If he could but persuade those listening to him that the change in his conduct was the result of divine interposition,—that in preaching the faith which once he destroyed he was acting in obedience to a voice from heaven,—then, on their own principles as Jews, they were bound to admit that he was acting in all good conscience. In endeavouring to effect this, he avoids everything which could tend to give offence, or to wound the prejudices of his hearers, and gives a prominent place to those things which brought out his own Jewish leanings. With consummate tact he brings vividly before them the circumstances of his early life and training, which they knew well had been of the most rigid Jewish type. So zealous had he been for the law, that he was the chief instrument in the persecution of the Christians, and was on an errand of this nature to Damascus when God supernaturally interfered, and gave an entirely new direction to all his energies. Having mentioned these facts, he informs them of his admission to the Christian Church by baptism; and is careful to state that

76. *Paul's address to the Jews from the stairs of the castle in Jerusalem.*

the rite had been performed by Ananias, "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt in Damascus." He keeps in the background as long as possible the terms of his commission, which were, that he was to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts ix. 15), but which he here states briefly but accurately to have been, that he should be a witness for Christ unto all men (Acts xxii. 15). He then informs them that on his conversion he did not go to the Gentiles, but came to Jerusalem; and so far was he from parting with his distinctive character as a Jew, that one of the first things he did in Jerusalem was to go as a suppliant to the temple (Acts xxii. 17). While thus engaged in one of the holiest duties of their common religion God again appeared to him, giving him the specific command to depart from Jerusalem. But he was unwilling to obey. He pleaded earnestly with God for permission to remain and labour among his countrymen, arguing that his former conduct would induce them to listen to him now. He alludes in touching terms to the part he had taken in compassing the death of Stephen, and reasons that such well-known facts would secure for him and his message a favourable hearing. But his pleading was unavailing. God had work for him to do among the Gentiles, and to the Gentiles he must go (Acts xxii. 19-21).*

The mention of his special mission to the Gentiles at once called into action the enmity which Paul had temporarily succeeded in pacifying. The multitude immediately raised a shout, "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live;" and, in token of their abhorrence of the sentiments to which they had been listening, they shook their garments and cast dust into the air. The

77. *Paul is saved from scourging by the assertion of his Roman citizenship.*

* This incident in the apostle's life is only mentioned here. We could not infer from the account in the ninth chapter whether his stay in Jerusalem on the occasion of his first visit to it after his conversion was long or short (Acts ix. 26-30). But the account which the apostle here gives shows us that the visit was short. He wishes to leave the impression on his hearers that he had not been long in Jerusalem when he went to the temple, where God commanded him to *make haste and depart quickly out of Jerusalem* (Acts xxii. 18). When we turn to the Epistle to the Galatians, we find that his whole stay was only fifteen days (Gal. i. 18)—a striking example of undesigned coincidence.

chief captain, ignorant of the Hebrew language, naturally enough imagined that such conduct must result from something more than mere bigotry, and, anxious to ascertain the true reason of the outcry against Paul, gave orders that he should be brought into the castle, and there be subjected to scourging, in order to compel him to acknowledge his crimes. This cruel method of extorting a confession was, even in the case of ordinary criminals, unlawful, and much more so in the case of one who, like Paul, possessed the right of Roman citizenship. But Lysias had no scruples in violating the strict letter of the law, especially as there was apparently little risk of his being ever called to account. The centurion who had received the orders from Lysias immediately set about carrying them into execution. The usual practice in such cases was to place the prisoner in a stooping posture,* and then bind him with thongs to an upright post. While Paul was thus being bound, he asked the centurion if it was lawful to scourge a Roman citizen who had been convicted of no crime. The centurion, learning that the prisoner was a Roman, went and reported the fact to his commanding officer, accompanying the report with a significant caution as to the need of due consideration before taking any further action in the case. Lysias, who had retired after giving the necessary orders, immediately came in person, and solemnly asked Paul if he were a Roman.† Paul replied in the affirmative; which led the officer to express his astonishment that one in his apparently low and despised condition should possess a privilege for which he had paid a large price.‡ But though his condition might seem low and despised, it was really more honourable than that of his questioner, as he had by birthright what the other had only obtained by purchase. The assertion of his citizenship produced an instant change in

* *Προτείνω*, to stretch forward.

† This was naturally the first question. To assume the privilege of citizenship, with the view of escaping any punishment, was visited with death; and Lysias knew well that Paul would not dare to run this risk, and so he puts him, as it were, on his oath on the point.

‡ Citizenship was, at first, a privilege rarely conferred but for signal service rendered to the State. But when Rome began to decline, and when the government required a large revenue, the privilege was sold for money, and wealthy provincials eagerly purchased it for their sons, with the view of their thereby rising in the service of the State.

the conduct of the Roman officials towards Paul. All idea of scourging him was now at an end, and Lysias himself was afraid because, in the temple area, he had caused him to be bound (Acts xxi. 33)—a fear which comes strikingly out in his despatch to Felix, in which he dexterously attempts to make it appear that he was from the first aware that Paul was a Roman (Acts xxiii. 27).

Lysias now adopted a different method of ascertaining the nature of the accusations brought against the apostle. He summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrim, and, loosing Paul from his bonds, brought him before the council. Paul, having cast a keen, scrutinising glance on the assembly, assured them that he had been up to that hour a loyal Jew—loyal to God and the nation. This statement, coming from such a man, was so displeasing to the Sanhedrim that Ananias, who, as high priest, occupied the position of president, ordered the bystanders to smite him on the mouth. The rude and brutal order was immediately obeyed, and Paul, still smarting from the pain of the blow, and, in the not unnatural irritation of the moment, turning on him who had given the order, denounced the judgment of God upon him for this wanton violation of the very first principles of justice.* This bold denunciation of the high priest surprised the Sanhedrim, who charged the apostle with reviling God's high priest. Paul, only now learning from whom the order had proceeded, at once apologised, stating that he was not aware that it was the high priest who had commanded him to be smitten,† for had he

78. Paul examined before the Sanhedrim.

* Some see in the apostle's words a prophecy of the death of Ananias. It seems more natural to suppose that he simply meant to indicate that such patent injustice would not go unpunished; and this is all the more probable, since, from the context, it is evident that he was not aware who had given the order. Ananias was son of Zebedæus, and succeeded Joseph son of Camydus in the high priesthood. He was nominated to the office by Herod, King of Chalcis, A.D. 48, and A.D. 52 was sent to Rome to answer before Claudius on a charge of oppression brought by the Samaritans. It is uncertain whether he lost his office. He was deposed by Felix, and assassinated by the Sicarii, at the beginning of the Jewish war.—*Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.*

† This statement of the apostle has occasioned needless difficulty. Some imagine that the words were spoken ironically; but this proceeds on the supposition that Ananias had been deprived of his office, which is uncertain: others, that the apostle was really unacquainted with the person of the high priest; but, even though he were, he would have recognised him from his official position. It seems altogether probable that Paul heard the order given without knowing who gave it; which may be accounted for by the weakness of vision with which he seems to have been affected.

been so, his principles as a Jew would have kept him from speaking evil of the ruler of his people. The incident thus recorded convinced the apostle that he must not expect impartial justice from the Sanhedrim ; and, accordingly, with remarkable skill and dexterity, he formed the resolution of dividing the council against itself. He was well acquainted with the constitution of that body ; he knew that the two leading parties of which it was composed hated each other with a deadly hatred, and that their present accord was caused by common hostility to himself. If he could only succeed in kindling into flame the smothered hatred which the one party cherished to the other, he would divert their hostility from himself, and might secure, for a time at least, the protection of the party of which he professed himself an adherent. With this view, he declared himself a Pharisee, and the offspring of Pharisees, asserting that the matter in dispute between himself and the Sanhedrim was neither more nor less than the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—the maintenance of which had always been the grand distinctive principle of the Pharisees, whilst the Sadducees denied both this doctrine and the existence altogether of a spiritual world. This confession of his faith produced an instantaneous change in the disposition of a part of the Sanhedrim towards him. The Pharisees, glad of anything which would give them an advantage over their opponents, immediately took the apostle's part, and declared that, in so far as they were concerned, they found no fault in him, and that there was every reason to believe that an angel or a spirit had spoken to him. The discussion became very hot—so hot that Lysias was afraid that Paul should be torn in pieces by the contending factions ; to prevent which he ordered the soldiers in attendance to go down into the council chamber, and take Paul by force and bring him to the castle.

In the midst of these tossings to and fro, the apostle had

79. Conspiracy formed against Paul, who is sent to Cesarea. vouchsafed to him one of those visions which, in times of emergency, God was graciously pleased to grant to uphold the faith of his servant. He was commanded to be of good cheer, and assured that his long-

cherished desire of visiting Rome (Acts xix. 21 ; Rom. xv. 23) should receive its accomplishment. Unable to obtain possession of Paul's person by fair means, his enemies did not scruple to have recourse to stratagem. About forty Jews banded themselves together, and bound themselves under a curse, that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. To effect this purpose, they approached the Sanhedrim, and having informed them of their design, unfolded the plan by which they were to carry it out. The Sanhedrim were to request Lysias to bring Paul down from the castle to the council chamber, under pretence as if they wished to examine him more carefully than they had yet been able to do ; and the conspirators, lying in wait in some of the intricate and narrow passages, were to rush upon him in his descent and kill him. It is evident from the narrative (Acts xxiii. 21), that application had actually been made to Lysias, and that he had given a promise to comply with the request. But, in the meantime, the secret had become known. Paul's sister's son—of whom we know nothing beyond what is recorded of him in connection with this plot against his uncle's life—a young man at that time in Jerusalem, either as a permanent dweller there or with the view of completing his education, received intelligence of the intended assassination. He immediately proceeded to the castle and informed Paul, who, calling one of the centurions in attendance, requested him to bring the lad to the chief captain. Lysias received him cordially, and favoured him with a private interview, during which he disclosed to him what he had learned regarding the conspiracy, and took it upon him to press earnestly upon Lysias the duty of refusing to fulfil the promise given to the Sanhedrim. Lysias, having listened to the story, dismissed the youth, charging him to tell no one of what had passed, and with the promptitude of a Roman soldier, formed his plans for the safe keeping of the prisoner. He issued orders to two centurions to have a large escort ready by nine o'clock that same evening for the purpose of conveying Paul to Cæsarea. Some idea may be formed of the determined nature of the hostility of the Jews to Paul, from the fact that the escort

amounted to the large number of 470 men, 70 of whom were cavalry. The officer in command of the escort received from Lysias the following despatch, addressed to his excellency the governor, stationed at Caesarea : *

“ Claudio Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them : then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. † And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council : whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.”

Starting from Jerusalem in the evening, the escort proceeded on their journey. At Antipatris the foot-soldiers returned, leaving the horsemen to pursue the remainder of their way alone. On their arrival in Caesarea, the centurion delivered his despatch to Felix, and at the same time presented Paul before him. Having read the despatch, Felix inquired of what province the prisoner was, and, having learned that he was of Cilicia, informed him that he would hear his case on the arrival of his accusers. In the meantime, he gave orders that he should be kept in Herod’s judgment hall. ‡

* Felix, a freedman of Claudio, appointed by him Procurator of Judea, A.D. 53. His government was mean and tyrannical. Tacitus says of him : “ Per omnem saevitiam et libidinem jus regium servili ingenio exercuit.” His period of office was full of seditions and troubles ; and he himself is charged with having used the sicarii for his own purposes. He was recalled by Nero, probably A.D. 60 ; on which occasion he was accused by the Jews in Caesarea, and would have suffered the penalty due to his atrocities, had not his brother Pallas prevailed with Nero to spare him.—Smith’s *Dictionary of the Bible*.

† It is impossible not to admire the dexterity with which Lysias endeavours to make it appear that his reason for rescuing Paul out of the hands of the Jewish mob was his knowledge that he was a Roman ; whereas he did not learn this until he had bound him and given orders to scourge him. Paley sees in this falsehood, so dexterously introduced, a proof of the genuineness of the despatch. A forger could not have done it.

‡ In the original, *Prætorium*—a palace built by Herod the Great, at that time the official residence of the Roman governor. Paul was not cast into prison, but was kept in the buildings attached to the palace.—*Alford in loco*.

According to the instructions given by Lysias, a deputation from the Sanhedrim proceeded to Cæsarea. The deputation—headed by Ananias, and taking with them an advocate named Tertullus—started from Jerusalem five days after the apostle. 80. *Paul tried before Felix—charges against him.*

On their arrival in Cæsarea, Paul was brought into the hall of judgment, and Tertullus, in name of the Sanhedrim, laid the information against him. The address of Tertullus on the occasion was marked by the grossest flattery of the judge, and by the most glaring disregard of the truth. He assured Felix that his clients entertained the most grateful sense of the manifold obligations under which he had laid them, and that his forethought and prudence had been the means of securing for them much quietness and tranquillity. Having thus endeavoured to secure the ear of the governor, he proceeded to state the formal charges against the prisoner. These resolved themselves into three: He was a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world; he was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; and he had gone about to profane the temple. Tertullus, with the view still further of conciliating Felix, expressed regret that the case should have come before him at all. This would have been unnecessary, but for the interference of Lysias; for the Sanhedrim were in the act of judging the prisoner according to the regular forms of their own law,* when Lysias came upon them with great violence,† and took him out of their hands; and had thus given unnecessary trouble both to Felix and the Sanhedrim, who had been obliged to send a deputation all the way to Cæsarea to dispose of a case which could have been easily settled in Jerusalem. The members of the Sanhedrim who were present signified their assent to the statements made by Tertullus, although they must have been convinced that they would not stand a strict investigation.

Felix, having listened to the charges, gave Paul an opportunity of replying to them. This he did with great wisdom

* Compare with this statement of Tertullus the actual facts of the case as recorded Acts xxi. 27-31, and its utter falsehood is at once apparent.

† Compare Acts xxi. 31, 32. The statement was adroitly made by the advocate to prejudice Felix against Lysias, and so to destroy the value of any testimony in Paul's favour which the latter might give.

and spirit. He expressed his satisfaction in being privileged to speak before one who had been for many years a judge in the nation, and who might consequently be assumed to be well acquainted with the manners and customs of the people. He then replied to the charges in detail. In regard to the first, he informed Felix that the matter was in small compass, and its truth or falsehood not difficult of investigation ; for, since his arrival in Jerusalem until the time then present, there had elapsed a period of only twelve days.* During that time he had been found neither in the temple disputing with any man, nor raising up the people in the synagogue or anywhere throughout the city. No vestige of proof could be produced in substantiation of the charge. The second charge the apostle did not deny ; on the contrary, he admitted that, after the way they called heresy, he worshipped the God of his fathers. In making this admission, however, he was careful to point out that this mode of worship was thoroughly consistent with the fullest faith in the law and the prophets, and with the maintenance of the doctrine of the resurrection. Indeed he intimated that this doctrine, which they themselves professed to hold, was bound up with the question of Christ's resurrection, and thus indirectly hinted that his accusers, and not he, were guilty of heresy. Regarding the third accusation, he showed that his object in coming to Jerusalem was to bring alms and offerings to his nation ; and so far was he from profaning the temple, that at the time of his arrest he was actually engaged in one of the most solemn rites of the Jewish ritual. The groundlessness of the whole charge was manifest from the fact that those individuals who found him in the temple, and who alone were qualified to bear witness in the case, were not present to give their evidence. The Sanhedrim could lay nothing to his charge beyond his statement made

* Various methods of reckoning these twelve days have been suggested. In Barth's Bible Manual they are thus reckoned :—“The first, that on which he reached the city (Acts xxi. 17) ; the second, that of his interview with James (ver. 18) ; the third, that of his undertaking to perform the vow (ver. 26) ; the seventh, that on which he was arrested, and when of the seven days of the vow five had passed ; the eighth, that of his trial before the Sanhedrim (Acts xxii. 30) ; the ninth, that on which he was brought down from Jerusalem (Acts xxiii. 11-31) ; and the thirteenth, five days thereafter.” This is also the mode suggested by Alford.

before them in Jerusalem, that the whole matter in dispute turned upon the resurrection of the dead.

Felix, having listened to Paul's defence, must, from his knowledge of Christianity, have been convinced of his innocence ; but yet he acted in a manner completely in consonance with his character.

82. *Felix is recalled, and gives no decision in the case.*

Unwilling to give offence to the Jews by boldly declaring the charges frivolous and groundless, he put them off by informing them that he would give his decision when Lysias, the chief captain, came down. Paul he committed to a centurion ; but, as a sort of compromise for detaining him in custody at all, he gave orders that he should not be treated as an ordinary prisoner, but should have a certain amount of liberty, and should be allowed to receive visits from any of his acquaintance. We do not read that Lysias ever came down to Cæsarea, and so the apostle was kept a prisoner, and the decision in his case put off for two years. At some time during these two years, Felix, in order to gratify his wife Drusilla,* who was a Jewess, sent for Paul and heard him discourse on the faith in Christ. The apostle, on this occasion, reasoned of righteousness, temperance,† and future judgment, so powerfully, that even the hardened Felix trembled, and was fain to stifle his awakened conscience by the promise of listening to the message of salvation at a more convenient season. He held many other interviews with the prisoner, in the expectation that he would offer a bribe as the price of being released. But Paul, even though he had been aware of the governor's object, could be no party to such an unrighteous proceeding ; and so, when, at the expiry of two years, Felix was recalled, he endeavoured to propitiate the Jews by leaving Paul in custody.

Felix was succeeded in the government of Judea by Portius Festus, who, three days after his arrival in Cæsarea, paid a visit to Jerusalem. The San- 83. *Festus is made Procurator. Paul appeals to Caesar.*

* Daughter of Herod Agrippa I. ; had been the wife of Azizus, King of Emesa, but had deserted him, and was now living in adulterous connection with Felix. She perished, along with her son, in an eruption of Vesuvius.

† Ἐγκράτεια—self-control ; and not to be confined to the restricted meaning which we now attach to the word temperance

and judging that the new governor would be inclined to grant them any reasonable request, informed him concerning Paul, and desired him to bring him from Cæsarea to Jerusalem with a view to the settlement of the case. Their real object in preferring this request was the expectation that, on the journey, it might be possible to assassinate the obnoxious prisoner. But Festus, however willing to gratify the Jews, was unwilling to traverse the forms of Roman law. He distinctly informed them that it was not customary for the Romans to deliver any man to death until he had been brought face to face with his accusers, and been allowed an opportunity of answering the charges brought against him. In these circumstances he could not grant the prayer of their petition, but he intimated that he himself intended to return to Cæsarea forthwith, and that, should the Sanhedrim wish to appear and press the charges, he would be glad to give them an early opportunity of so doing. The Sanhedrim had no alternative but to embrace this offer. Festus, after a stay of some eight or ten days in the capital, returned to Cæsarea, and, on the very day succeeding his return, took his seat on the bench, and gave orders that Paul should be brought before him. We have no detailed account of the charges brought against the apostle by his prosecutors on this occasion—they are simply said to have been many and grievous. We learn, however, from the nature of Paul's answer, that the indictment was the same as that under which he had been tried before Felix. In his answer he distinctly refers to the three charges contained in that indictment, and asserts that “Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all.” To Festus, who was an utter stranger to all matters connected with Judaism and Christianity, the whole affair was inexplicable. The accusations were not by any means what he had expected. They turned on what appeared to him mere differences of religious belief, and had reference mainly to the question whether one called Jesus was dead or alive. Doubting of such manner of questions, as he informs Agrippa, but in reality through a desire, not unnatural, of doing the Jews a pleasure, Festus proposed that the trial should be transferred to Jerusa-

lem, but on the express condition that it should take place before himself. Paul, dreading that after all he might be delivered into the hands of the Jews, opposed the proposal, and asserted his right, as a Roman citizen, of being judged before a Roman tribunal. He declared that he had committed no offence against the Jews, and that no man knew this better than Festus. If, indeed, it could be shown that he had committed any crime worthy of death, then he refused not to die; but, as it was impossible to prove any of the charges brought against him, he challenged the power of the procurator to transfer the case to Jerusalem. And to show that, when circumstances demanded it, he would not flinch from the vindication of his rights, he took the bold step of appealing unto Cæsar, whereby, if the appeal were allowed, the trial was at once arrested and taken entirely out of the hands of the provincial governor. Both Festus and the Jews must have been surprised at the turn things had taken. But the appeal once made must be considered, and Festus, after consulting with his assessors,* agreed to sustain it; and thus, in a way quite unexpected, the Lord was about to grant to his faithful servant the fulfilment of his anxious desire to visit Rome.†

Shortly after the arrival of Festus in Judea, King Agrippa,‡ accompanied by his half-sister Bernice, paid him a visit of ceremony, in order to offer him his congratulations on his appointment as governor.

84. *Agrippa visits Festus—Consultation regarding Paul.*

* Greek, Συμβούλιον—English Ver., Council. “The conventus of citizens in the provinces assembled to try causes on the court days,”—Alford. But many imagine that the word here refers to the Sanhedrim, and that Festus, before sustaining the appeal, consulted them if they had any objection to his doing so.

† A Roman citizen under the republic had (by the *lex Valeria*) the right of appealing in criminal cases from the decision of a magistrate to the people (*provocatio appellatio*), and as the Emperor succeeded to the power of the people, there was an appeal to him in the last resort. Hence, in the present instance, Paul appeals to Cæsar—*i.e.*, the Emperor. See Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.

‡ Herod Agrippa II., son of Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii. 1), and great-grandson of Herod the Great. He was only seventeen when his father died, A.D. 44, and Claudius refused to appoint him successor. In A.D. 50, he gave him, however, the kingdom of Chalcis, and two years after transferred him to the tetrarchies formerly held by Philip and Lysanias. In addition to his civil offices, Agrippa held the presidency of the Temple at Jerusalem, and was intrusted with the appointment of the high priest, Bernice, the eldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I., was married first to her uncle Herod, King of Chalcis, and after his death she lived, under circumstances of great suspicion, with her brother Agrippa II. She afterwards became the mistress of Vespasian and of his son Titus.—Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible.

After Agrippa had spent a considerable time in Cæsarea, Festus, judging that, from his position as well as his Jewish training, he might be able to assist him in making up his report, took the opportunity of informing him of the case of Paul. He detailed the various steps which had been taken to have the matter settled, and concluded by informing him of Paul's appeal to Rome. Agrippa having expressed a wish to hear the prisoner for himself, Festus cordially assented, and assured him that he would grant the wished-for opportunity on the following day. Accordingly, on the morrow, a brilliant assembly convened for the purpose of hearing the apostle. Agrippa and Bernice, with much state and display, the officers of the garrison, the leading citizens of Cæsarea, and the Roman governor himself, all gathered together to hear the prisoner of the Lord Jesus plead in his Master's cause. Never before in the history of Christianity had it fallen to the lot of any preacher to address such a distinguished assemblage of wealth and fashion. When the company had all met in the audience-chamber, Paul, wearing on his wrist the chain which bound him to his keeper, was brought forth; after which Festus addressed the meeting, giving a brief but explicit narrative of the case, accompanied by the emphatic statement of his own conviction that the man was innocent of the crimes laid to his charge—a conviction to which he was prevented from giving effect by the fact that the prisoner had exercised his right of appealing to the Emperor. He had sustained the appeal, but was utterly at a loss to know the nature of the report he ought to make. For this reason he had taken advantage of the presence of Agrippa, and had brought the prisoner before him, that, after examination had, he might have somewhat to write; for it seemed unreasonable to send a prisoner to Rome and not to specify the crimes laid against him.

Paul, having received permission from Agrippa to speak,

85. Paul's address before Agrippa. stretched forth his hand and began. The address which he delivered on this occasion is, in its main features, similar to that which he addressed to his countrymen from the stairs of the castle in Jerusalem, but with just those differences which one would expect to meet with when we bear in mind the character of the

respective audiences. He commenced by expressing his gratification at having the privilege of speaking before one so well qualified as Agrippa to give an impartial judgment in the case, and then proceeded to state that, during the whole course of his life, he had been an orthodox Jew, faithful to the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers—a hope cherished not by him alone, but by the nation at large. His faithfulness to this hope was the real cause of his being a prisoner there that day. No doubt—and this he rather hints at than broadly states—there was this difference between himself and his countrymen, that “he had already arrived at the accomplishment of the hope, to which they, with all their sacrifices and their zeal, were as yet only earnestly tending to, having it yet in the future.”* And if, as he believed, this hope had found its accomplishment in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and his consequent appointment as the true Messiah, why should this be deemed a thing impossible, if God actually does raise the dead (Acts xxvi. 1-8)? He himself had once held views similar to those now held by the Jews at large, and had given practical proof of the sincerity with which he had entertained them by persecuting to the death all who called on the name of the Lord Jesus (ver. 9-11). But he had been arrested in his mad career, and he was now a preacher of the faith which once he destroyed. This leads him to give a particular account of the means by which this remarkable change had been effected. The Lord Jesus had appeared to him, and from that hour his world had been turned upside down; and the hinge on which his whole life moved, and which gave it its consistency, was the vision on the road to Damascus (ver. 12-18). Disobedience to this heavenly vision was impossible. He could not but speak the things which he had seen and heard. Accordingly, he conferred not with flesh and blood, but straightway preached that Jesus was the Christ. It was for this that the Jews sought to kill him, but, by the good hand of his God upon him, he had been preserved unto that day; and had never ceased to witness to small and great, that, in accordance with ancient prophecy, Christ should suffer and should be the first that should rise

* Alford *in loco*.

from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles (ver. 19-23).

As the apostle thus earnestly and eloquently reasoned regarding the faith in Christ, and appealed to prophecy in confirmation of what he advanced, Festus, unable to understand his earnestness, or to comprehend his meaning, interrupted him by the rude remark that his intense devotion to learning had turned his brain, and that he was evidently beside himself. Paul, with an admirable mixture of firmness and courtesy, repelled the charge, and declared that, so far from bearing indications of a disordered fancy, his words were characterised by truth and sobriety. Agrippa could bear him out in this statement, for, as a Jew, he could not be ignorant of the facts concerning Jesus, seeing that his crucifixion had taken place publicly in the metropolis of the nation, and at a time when Jerusalem was more than ordinarily crowded. Then turning, and addressing the king by name, he appealed to him as believing the prophets, and on this ground also capable of witnessing in his favour. Agrippa must have felt rather uncomfortable under this personal appeal to his belief in Jewish prophecy, and so he turned the matter off with the sneering remark that the apostle was counting too easily on his power of converting him to Christianity.* The apostle, taking up Agrippa's words in the sense in which these had been used, expressed his fervent desire that, whether it might be with ease or with difficulty, all his hearers might reach the same blessed condition of peace and joy to which he had attained; nay, that they might be altogether such as he was, "except these bonds." Upon this Agrippa rose, and the whole company followed his example. On retiring, a conference was held on the case, the general opinion being that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Agrippa gave it as his deliberate verdict, that, had it not been for the appeal to Rome, the prisoner might at once have been liberated.

* This seems the most natural interpretation of Agrippa's remark. Nothing in the narrative, nor in what we know of the character of Agrippa, would lead us to infer that the words were spoken in earnest, or that any serious impression had been made upon the heart of the king. The words are the cold sneer of a worldling who, in the presence of such an assemblage as was then convened, wished to show how little sympathy he had with the despised Nazarenes.

CHAPTER IX.

VOYAGE TO ROME, AND SHIPWRECK.

ACTS xxvii., xxviii. 16. A.D. 60, 61.

PAUL was detained in Cæsarea only until an opportunity should occur of sending him to Rome. Communication between these two towns was irregular and uncertain. There was no vessel sailing about that time direct to Rome; but one belonging to Adramyttium was about to start on her homeward voyage, intending to call at some of the ports on the coast of Proconsular Asia. It was accordingly determined to embark Paul and some other prisoners on board this ship, in the expectation that they would fall in with a vessel bound for Italy. We shall see that in this expectation they were not disappointed. The prisoners were intrusted to the charge of Julius, a centurion of what is termed Augustus' band.* Paul was accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, and himself probably a prisoner (Col. iv. 10), and by the ever faithful Luke. The vessel in which they sailed was, in all probability, a coaster; which may account for the visit paid to Sidon, which they reached on the day after leaving Cæsarea. At this early period of the voyage, Paul had acquired a marked influence over Julius, who, on their arrival in Sidon, treated him with much courtesy, and gave him permission to go ashore and visit his friends. This liberty must have been very gratifying to one who, for upwards of two years, had been a prisoner in Herod's prætorium in

87. *Voyage from
Cæsarea to Fair
Havens.*

* It is difficult to ascertain what band this was. One thing may be noticed. The text need not imply that it was stationed in Cæsarea; it simply states that Julius was an officer in this band.

Cæsarea. On leaving Sidon, they were unable, owing to contrary winds, to steer straight for the coasts of Asia,* but were compelled to sail under Cyprus, and to run along its eastern seaboard, until they found themselves under the shelter of the high lands of Asia Minor. Here they had the advantage of a lee shore and of the currents, which, in that quarter, always draw in a westerly direction. Accordingly, we find them sailing through the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, and arriving at Myra, a city of Lycia. There was at that time in the harbour of Myra an Alexandrian vessel, laden with wheat for Rome. The vessel may have called at Myra for the purpose of trade; or probably the same winds which caused the Adramyttian ship to keep to the east of Cyprus had driven this vessel out of her course, and compelled her to run for shelter to one of the harbours on the southern shores of Asia Minor. Be this as it may, the prisoners were transferred on board the Alexandrian vessel, which must have been one of considerable size and tonnage, as, in addition to her cargo, she carried, inclusive of the crew, a company of two hundred and seventy-six souls. On leaving Myra, the vessel encountered contrary winds, and her progress for many days was slow. It was a matter of considerable difficulty, even with the advantage of a lee shore, to work the vessel against the prevailing westerly winds, and, on coming opposite Cnidus, which lies at the south-western angle of Asia Minor, the ship, exposed to the full force of the wind sweeping down the Archipelago, was unable to hold her course. Accordingly, it was determined to run for the southern shore of Crete; and so passing, but not without difficulty, Cape Salmone, the north-eastern point of that island, they arrived at the harbour of Fair Havens, in the neighbourhood of which was a town called Lasea.

Much longer time had been consumed in the voyage than

88. *Voyage from Fair Havens to Malta.* had been calculated on. The Jewish fast of the Atonement, which fell toward the end of

September, was past, and in that age it was not considered prudent to undertake long voyages after that season

* By Asia is meant Proconsular Asia, which did not include Lycia. The direct course from Sidon would have been by the west side of Cyprus. Compare Paul's voy-

of the year. A consultation, accordingly, was held at Fair Havens regarding their future course. Paul, who had had practical experience of the dangers of the deep (2 Cor. xi. 25), gave it as his opinion that any attempt to proceed farther would be attended with much danger, and strongly advised them to winter where they were. But the owner of the vessel, who was on board, and the captain, were unwilling to winter in Fair Havens, chiefly because the harbour was not well adapted for that purpose; and the centurion, who seems to have had the control of the ship's movements, naturally deferred to the opinion of men whose acquaintance with the sea might be considered much greater than Paul's. The resolution was accordingly formed of leaving Fair Havens, and of making an attempt to reach Phenice, another harbour in Crete, which, from its position, was more commodious to winter in.* Beyond Fair Havens, to the west, lies Cape Mattala, where the Cretan coast-line suddenly bends to the north. Phenice lay beyond this cape, and accordingly, when a gentle south wind sprung up, the opportunity of reaching the harbour seemed to have arrived. The anchors were weighed, and the vessel sailed from Fair Havens, keeping close in-shore. So deceptive was the southerly breeze that it was not deemed necessary to take in the ship's boat, which was allowed to tow behind. But they had not proceeded far on their course when a severe storm came on. It was of the nature of a typhoon, and was known by the name of Euroclydon—better known now by its modern

age from the coast of Asia to Tyre at the close of his third journey (Acts xxi. 1-3), where it will be seen that the ship ran straight from Patara to Tyre.

* The harbour is described as lying "toward the south-west and north-west;" that is, the middle point between these, which is west. It is perfectly manifest, however, that a harbour exposed to the west could not have been commodious for wintering in. In the original the harbour is described thus: *Λιμένα τῆς Κρήτης βλέποντα κατὰ λίβα καὶ κατὰ χῶρον*, where *κατὰ* can only mean *down*; that is, the harbour looks *down* these winds—in the direction in which they blow, not that from which they come. This meaning makes the whole passage clear. The harbour lies towards the north-east and south-east, and was accordingly protected from the westerly winds. It has been suggested that the description is to be conceived of as taken from the water; that is, "that the harbour looks from the water toward the land that encloses it, in the direction of S.W. and N.W."—*Conybeare and Howson*. This is unlikely, though it does not alter the meaning. Consult on this, and indeed on the whole voyage, Mr. Smith's admirable treatise on *The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*.

title, Levanter. The storm came off the land,* and as it was impossible to keep the vessel's head to it, they allowed her to scud before it, and were carried to the lee of the small island of Clauda, where, under the protection of the shore, preparations were made for weathering the storm. They at once set about taking in the boat—a work of no slight difficulty in such a sea as must then have been running. Having done this, steps were immediately taken to undergird the ship; that is, to pass ropes round her hull or frame, and make them taut on deck. The object of this was to prevent the vessel's timbers from springing—a danger to which ancient vessels were more exposed than modern ones, and which, in the present case, was by no means imaginary, for it is quite manifest, from the whole strain of the history, that the ship made so much water as to be in great danger of foundering. But another source of anxiety now presented itself. At no great distance, on the African shore, lay the Syrtes,† and if the vessel were allowed to drift before the wind, she would inevitably be driven on these quicksands, and become a wreck. Preparations were immediately made for avoiding this danger. The vessel's head was turned from the Syrtes, and the sails so set as to enable her

* In our version it is, "There arose against it," where it can only mean the island of Crete. As the ship was on the southern shore of Crete, this rendering would make it appear that the wind came from the south; but from the course the vessel followed after being caught in the storm it is evident that the wind came from the north. In the original the expression is ἔβαλεν κατ' αὐτῆς, where, by giving κατὰ the meaning *down*, the true rendering is at once seen to be, "There came down from it, that is, the island," Mr. Smith, giving κατὰ the meaning of *against*, supposes that the feminine pronoun αὐτῆς refers to the ship, as if the meaning were, "There arose against it, that is, the ship." But the word which Luke uses for ship is πλοῖον, which is neuter. He admits, however, that to give κατὰ the meaning we have assigned to it, and to make αὐτῆς refer to Crete, satisfies all the conditions of the narrative. *Vide* his remarks *in loco*.

† Translated "quicksands," which is unfortunate, because the name in the original was local and limited, and referred to the African Syrtes—the broad and deep bight on the north African coast between Carthage and Cyrene. They were an object of dread to ancient mariners.

Sive per Syrtes iter *astuosa*,
Sive facturus, &c.—HORACE, *Odes*, I. 22.

to drift as close to the wind as possible;* that is, in a general north-westerly direction. From this time until they reached Malta, the vessel was allowed to drift. The storm still continuing with great severity, it was deemed advisable on the day after leaving Claudia to lighten the vessel—which was probably done by casting part of the cargo overboard. On the third day the whole tackling of the ship which was not indispensable to her safe working was cast into the sea—an operation in which the passengers lent their assistance. The danger was intensified by the murky state of the sky. Neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and it was impossible, from the absence of the compass and the nautical instruments of modern times, to form any correct idea of the position of the ship, or the point to which they were drifting. So desperate did matters seem, that all hope of being saved was taken away; but, in this the hour of deepest darkness, God was graciously pleased to appear to Paul and to assure him that “he *must* be brought before Cæsar;” and that, for his sake, the lives of all on board should be spared. It was at the same time revealed to him that the vessel should be cast on a certain island. Having received this heavenly consolation, Paul communicated it to his companions in distress, and cheered them with the assurance of his deep conviction that no lives should be lost. The storm had now continued with unabated fury for thirteen days, and the vessel was tossed helplessly in the sea called Adria.† But about midnight of the fourteenth day after leaving Fair Havens, the sailors, warned probably by the ominous sound of breakers ahead, suspected that land was near. The lead was immediately thrown and soundings taken, when the depth was found to be twenty fathoms. A little

* The expression in the original—*χαλάσαντες τὸ σκεῦος*—translated “strake sail,” is the most difficult of interpretation in the whole narrative. Mr. Smith shows conclusively that it cannot mean *strake sail*, for to do so would have been to run into the very danger which they wished to avoid. He supposes the word *σκεῦος*—“gear,” to refer to the “heavy yard which the ancient ships carried with the sail attached to it.” Consult his remarks pp. 108, 109, second edition.

† The term Adria embraces not only what is now called the Adriatic, but the sea which washes the whole west coast of Greece. Hence no inference can be drawn from this expression against Malta as the scene of the shipwreck, or in favour of Meleda, which lies near the head of the Adriatic.

farther on soundings were again taken, when the depth was only fifteen fathoms. It was thus evident that they were in the immediate vicinity of land, and, dreading lest they might drift on rocks and be dashed to pieces, four anchors were cast from the stern, which had the effect of arresting the ship's way.* In doubt whether the anchors would hold, and in danger every moment of foundering, the ship's company may well have wished anxiously for the appearance of the dawn. The sailors, looking only to their own safety, made an attempt to escape by the boat, which they lowered into the sea under pretence of using it to cast anchors from the bow. Their real design was penetrated by Paul, who at once informed the centurion and the soldiers that the ship's company could not be saved unless the sailors continued on board. The soldiers straightway cut the boat's ropes, and allowed her to drift to the shore. When morning began to break, Paul advised the whole company to partake of food. For fourteen days there had been much abstinence, and they had had no regular meal. This had arisen not so much from the want of provisions, as from the fact that the state of the vessel rendered the cooking of food almost impossible; and in all probability their stores were much damaged by water. But now, being in the neighbourhood of the "certain island" on which he knew they were to be cast, and convinced that a good meal would tend to their preservation,† inasmuch as it would strengthen them for the difficulties still to be encountered, the apostle earnestly and cheerfully besought them to take some meat. He himself set them the example, having previously, in the presence of them all, given thanks to God. The calm bearing of the apostle, so full of simple trust in his God, exerted a cheering influence on his fellow-passengers. "They were all of good cheer, and they

* It was quite common to anchor ancient ships by the stern, and they were provided with hawse-holes for the purpose. The reason for adopting the method on this occasion is obvious. If the vessel had been anchored by the bow, she might have swung round, and her stern might have come in contact with the shore. Besides, it was desirable to keep her head to the land, that she might be the more easily beached in the morning should the shore be found suitable.

† *Σωτηρία*, English Ver. health=safety or preservation.

also took some meat." Having thus supplied their present need, they lightened the ship by casting her cargo of wheat* into the sea. When daylight appeared they saw the land, but were unable to identify it.† They were, however, fortunate enough to discover a creek with a smooth sandy beach, and they resolved, if they could accomplish it, to run the ship aground at that point. In order to effect this, they cut the cables to which the anchors were attached, and allowed the anchors to drop into the sea.‡ They then loosed the rudder-bands,§ and raising the foresail to give the ship as much way as possible, they made for the shore. Falling into a place where two seas met,|| they ran the ship aground, and the forepart stuck fast and remained immovable, but the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves. The soldiers, afraid that any of the prisoners might escape, advised that they should be killed; but the centurion, anxious to save Paul, refused to comply with this cruel advice, and gave orders that those who could swim should first cast themselves into the sea and get to land, and that those who could not should seize hold of the boards and broken fragments of the ship and drift ashore. By these means the whole company escaped safe to the land, which they were then enabled to recognise as Malta.¶

* *Tὸν σῖτον.* Some imagine that *σῖτος* refers to the stores on board, and that the vessel was a passenger-ship.

† It has been said that, if the island had been Malta, it would have been impossible but that some of the sailors should have known it. But we must remember that it is exceedingly difficult to recognise a country with which we may have a partial acquaintance when we approach it from the sea; and, besides, the vessel was entirely out of the ordinary track, and sailors, who might have recognised Valetta, might well be unable to identify the coast on which they were.

‡ The reading in the margin of our translation is undoubtedly the correct one. There would have been little use in taking up the anchors of a vessel which was already almost a total wreck.

§ When ships were anchored by the stern, it was necessary to lift the rudders and secure them by lashings. When the rudders were let down again, the lashings were loosed or cut. Ancient vessels were steered by two paddles, one on each quarter.—*Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, p. 137, note.

|| "At the west end of St. Paul's Bay is an island, which they could not have known to be such from their place of anchorage. The island is separated from the mainland by a channel of about 100 yards wide, communicating with the outer sea. Just within this island, in all probability, was the place where the ship struck, in a place where two seas meet."—*Alford in loco*.

¶ In addition to the facts already given, all showing that Malta, and not Meleda, was the scene of the shipwreck, the following interesting particulars may be noticed.

On landing, they were treated with great kindness by the natives,* who gave them a cordial welcome, and kindled a fire, which was rendered necessary by reason of the rain and the cold. Paul, always willing to minister to the necessities of others, assisted in collecting sticks, and with his own hand placed them on the fire. While he was thus employed, a viper, which had been concealed in the wood, came out of the heat and fastened on his hand. The natives, observing the creature hanging on his hand, and well knowing it to be poisonous,† began to suspect that he must be some great criminal, who had only escaped the perils of the deep to be overtaken by vengeance on the land. The apostle, having shaken the reptile off his hand into the fire, sustained no harm, although the bystanders were satisfied that death must speedily ensue. But when no evil consequences followed the bite, they changed their opinion regarding him, and imagined him to be a god.‡ In the near neighbourhood of

A ship will drift at the rate of about $36\frac{1}{2}$ miles in 24 hours. Paul's ship was drifting for rather more than 13 days, for Luke evidently reckons his "fourteenth night" from the day the ship left Fair Havens, and a considerable part of that day must have passed before Claudius was left. Now in 13 days a ship would drift about 474 miles. But the actual distance between Claudius and St. Paul's Bay, in Malta, is 476.6 miles. It has been well said, this is more than a coincidence, it is absolute demonstration.—*Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, pp. 121-123.

* It has been argued that the term "barbarian" could not be applied to the inhabitants of Malta, and that, consequently, the island must have been Meleda. But the word is used in its strict Greek sense, and does not mean savage or uncivilised, but simply refers to the fact that the natives were not Greek colonists. Paul uses the word to indicate either those who were not Greeks (Rom. i. 14), or those who, however highly civilised, were not acquainted with the language which he used (1 Cor. xiv. 11). The conduct of the natives proves conclusively that they were not, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, barbarians.

† It has been said that no poisonous reptiles are now found in Malta, and consequently, Meleda must have been the island of the shipwreck. But it ought to be remembered that "perhaps there is nowhere a surface of equal extent in so artificial a state as that of Malta is at the present day, and nowhere has the aboriginal forest been more completely cleared. We need not, therefore, be surprised that, with the disappearance of the woods, the noxious reptiles which infested them should also have disappeared."—*Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul*, p. 147.

‡ The whole narrative distinctly shows that the bite of the viper was poisonous, and that Paul's exemption from death was due to the intervention of God. Luke does not hint at any such intervention, it is true, but only because he believes that the dullest of his readers would understand it without any such hint. The natives firmly believed that he must die, yet they change him from a murderer to a god, on seeing what took place. Need we further evidence that the divine power which they mistakenly attri-

the scene of the shipwreck were the possessions of Publius, who is described as being the chief man* of the island, and who, inviting Paul and his companions to his house, hospitably entertained them for three days. The father of Publius lay ill of fever, accompanied with dysentery.† Paul, after engaging in prayer, laid his hands on him, and healed him; on which many others throughout the island, who were labouring under disease, flocked to the apostle and were cured. In token of gratitude for these benefits conferred, the inhabitants honoured both him and his companions with many honours, and, when they departed from the island, supplied them with such things as they stood in need of.

After spending three months in Malta, the centurion found another ship of Alexandria, with the sign of the 90. *Voyage from
Malta to Rome.* Dioscuri, ‡ which had wintered in the isle, and which was now about to proceed to Italy. The prisoners having been put on board this vessel, they set sail from Malta early in the spring, and ran to Syracuse on the Sicilian coast, where they remained three days. On starting from Syracuse they encountered contrary winds, and were obliged to tack in order to make Rhegium, a sea-port on the mainland of Italy. After a stay of one day at Rhcgium, the wind veered to the south, and taking advantage of this favourable change, they started and arrived at Puteoli on the day following. The sea voyage was now at an end. In all likelihood, the vessel's destination was Puteoli, but be this as it may, Julius resolved on bringing his prisoners from Puteoli to Rome by land, along the great Appian Road, which ran from the Bay of Naples straight to the capital. Having spent seven days in Puteoli in the company of certain brethren found there, the apostle and

buted to Paul himself was really exerted on his behalf by Him who had said, *δρέσις ἀρωτοῦ?*—*Alford's note in loco.*

* *Πρώτος*—the first; in all likelihood an official title, and this all the more that Publius could scarcely be styled the chief man of the island while his father was still in life.

† It has been said that this disease is unknown in Malta, which could not, consequently, be the scene of the shipwreck. But this is mere fancy—the disease is well known in Malta.

‡ That is, as in our version, Castor and Pollux, the tutelary deities of sailors.

his companions went toward Rome. Intelligence of their arrival in Italy having reached Rome, two deputations of Roman Christians left the city to meet and welcome the prisoner of the Lord Jesus. These deputations met him at Appii Forum and at the Three Taverns * respectively, and their presence greatly cheered and encouraged him. On his arrival in Rome, Julius handed over his prisoners to the prefect of the city. Permission was given to Paul to dwell by himself, with a soldier who kept him. This relaxation, in all likelihood, he owed to the influence of Julius; and probably also to the report of Festus, who had expressed himself convinced that the apostle was chargeable with no crime.

* These were two stations on the Appian Road, the first about forty-three miles and the second about thirty-three from Rome.

CHAPTER X.

PAUL IN ROME.

ACTS xxviii. 17-31. A.D. 61-63.

PAUL's arrival in Rome is generally supposed to have taken place in the spring of A.D. 61. Three days after reaching the capital, he summoned the chief of the Jews to his residence, and explained to them, with singular skill and tact, the cause of his being a prisoner in Rome. He was there in virtue of an appeal taken to the Emperor, but this appeal he had been obliged to take, not because he had aught to accuse his nation of, but simply with the view of protecting himself from being made the victim of a false accusation. He had, accordingly, called them together to set his position in its proper light before them, and to assure them that he was a prisoner for no other cause than that he had preached the Messiah, the hope of Israel. The deputation who waited on him informed him that they had received no letters from Judea regarding him, nor had any of the brethren who visited Rome ever spoken evil of him. The sect to which he belonged was everywhere spoken against, and they expressed their desire to hear what he had to say in defence of doctrines on all hands so notoriously impugned. Paul most willingly agreed to address them, and a day was fixed for that purpose. At the time appointed, large numbers flocked to the apostle's lodging, and a whole day was spent by him in showing from the law and the prophets that Jesus was the Christ. The arguments of Paul were attended with the usual result: some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. It is evident, from his closing words on the occasion of this

91. *Interview
with Jews in
Rome.*

meeting, that the Jews of Rome as a body refused to believe the gospel, and accordingly he felt himself at full liberty to adopt the course which he had followed in Corinth and in Ephesus. Having solemnly warned his hearers of the terrible consequences which would spring from the rejection of his message, he declared his intention of leaving them, and of proclaiming to the Gentiles the gospel of the grace of God.

With the recital of the interview with the Jews, Luke draws 92. *Close of Luke's history.* his history somewhat abruptly to a close, simply informing us that Paul abode two whole years in his own hired house in Rome, in the enjoyment of as much liberty as was consistent with his condition as a prisoner. He was allowed to receive all who came unto him, to preach the kingdom of God, and to teach the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him. But beyond this general statement he gives us no detailed information regarding the labours of those two years. We are accordingly compelled during the remainder of our narrative to have recourse exclusively to the letters written by the apostle; and we shall endeavour, from the few hints contained in them, to give a connected, though necessarily an imperfect, sketch of the remainder of Paul's life.*

During the two years mentioned by Luke (Acts xxviii. 30), 93. *Paul's labours in Rome.* Paul had full liberty to preach the gospel within the limits prescribed by his condition as a prisoner. He was constantly chained to a soldier, and was not allowed to leave his own hired house. But no restriction seems at first to have been placed upon his reception of all who might choose to avail themselves of his teaching. In this way, we cannot doubt, he still rendered important service to the cause of Christianity, and the things which happened unto him fell out unto the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. i. 12). Rome was, in that age, the great centre of influence. Men from every nation under heaven were to be found within its walls.

* During the two years spoken of by Luke, Paul wrote the Epistles to Philemon, to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the Philippians. Facts in proof of this will be given as we proceed. In the meantime, the writing of these four letters during this imprisonment is assumed.

It contained many Christians of note in the Church, as we learn from the Epistle to the Romans, written some considerable time before Paul's arrival in the city. These brethren would be naturally attracted to the great apostle, and, guided by his teaching and heavenly wisdom, would be strengthened in the faith. Impelled, moreover, by the instincts of the new nature, they would seek to bring others under the influence of one who had proved himself, by his abundant labours, so faithful a workman in the cause of the Lord Jesus. And so, we may rest assured, the presence of Paul in Rome was the means of mightily furthering the gospel, and that, which to human wisdom might have appeared a hindrance, became, in the providence of God, the means of disseminating more widely the truths of Christianity. But the labours of Paul were not confined to Rome. He kept up a constant communication with the various churches which he had been instrumental in founding, and had zealous missionaries employed in carrying to and fro his messages of love, his warnings and his counsels—the fruit of his matured experience. Luke, his faithful companion, was with him (Col. iv. 14)—employed, we have every reason to believe, in writing that history which has been our guide hitherto. Timothy, his dear son, who as a son with the father served him in the gospel (Phil. ii. 22), was his close attendant, and ready to visit any of the churches when necessity required (Phil. ii. 23). Epaphras, a native of Colosse (Col. iv. 12), brought him intelligence of the errors which were springing up in the church of that city, and at the same time informed him of their love in the spirit (Col. i. 8). Epaphroditus, who for the work of Christ was nigh unto death (Phil. ii. 30), brought from the church in Philippi a contribution for his temporal wants, and carried back a letter overflowing with the tenderest affection and the warmest expressions of love (Phil. ii. 25). Tychicus, who had accompanied him from Europe into Asia during his last missionary tour (Acts xx. 4), a native of Ephesus, had visited him in Rome, and became the bearer of the letters to the Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7). In addition to these devoted and self-denying labourers,

we learn that his imprisonment was cheered by the presence of others, of whose active labours on this occasion no such distinct record is given. Mark, who had on a former occasion exhibited a degree of vacillation which rendered it impossible for the apostle to co-operate with him (Acts xv. 36-39), had redeemed his character, and is found by the side of his old master (Col. iv. 10), whom he henceforth serves so faithfully as to be one of two invited to comfort him in the imprisonment which terminated in his death (2 Tim. iv. 11). Aristarchus, who had accompanied him to Rome from Cæsarea, would seem to have been a fellow-prisoner (Col. iv. 10), although it is probable that, along with Epaphras (Philem. 23), he only shared his lodging, and thus made himself a prisoner for the apostle's sake. Mention is also made of Jesus Justus (Col. iv. 11), regarding whom we know nothing; and of Demas (Col. iv. 14), whose ~~subsequent history has made~~ history has made his name a byword in the Church (2 Tim. iv. 10). With such zealous coadjutors, ready to serve him at all times and seasons, the apostle, though a prisoner, was enabled to keep up a close correspondence with the various Christian communities which he had established, and thus to promote, in a very effectual way, the cause of his blessed Master.

Of the correspondence of this period four specimens remain,

94. Writes the Epistle to Philemon. which we shall now briefly consider. Among those who heard the apostle preach in Rome was

Onesimus, a runaway slave from Colosse. He was the property of Philemon, a member of the church in that town.* In some way not recorded this slave was brought in contact with Paul, and became a convert. The apostle would have retained him, that he might minister to him in the bonds of the gospel (Philem. 13), but without the consent of Philemon he would do nothing. He therefore decided on sending him home; and, in order to secure for him a favourable reception,

* Paley shows in his *Horæ Paulinæ* that Philemon belonged to Colosse. In Col. iv. 17, Archippus is addressed as the minister of the church in Colosse. He was undoubtedly a dweller in Colosse. In Philem. 2, salutations are sent to Archippus; and it is almost implied that he lived in the house of Philemon. If Archippus was a dweller in Colosse, so also must Philemon have been.

he wrote the letter to Philemon, which has been admired for the remarkable union it displays of "dignity, generosity, prudence, friendship, affection, skilful address, and purity." It would seem that Onesimus before his flight from Colosse had robbed his master, and Paul requests Philemon to put that to his account, and promises faithfully to repay it (Philem. 18, 19). Very touching is the allusion he makes to the boldness he might have had in Christ to *enjoin* him that which was convenient, but that for love's sake he would *beseech* him, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He urges on Philemon the duty of receiving Onesimus, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved; and expresses his entire confidence that Philemon would do even more than he had asked him. We learn from Col. iv. 7-9 that Onesimus was accompanied on his return by Tychicus.*

Colosse, a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, contained a flourishing Christian church. As we know (Col. ii. 1) that Paul never personally visited this church, it is probable that it had not been established at the date of that visit to Phrygia recorded Acts xviii. 23, where the apostle is said to have gone through Phrygia confirming the churches. We are, indeed, left almost in entire doubt both as to the time of its establishment and the person by whom it was first organised. From several expressions occurring in the epistle addressed to the church in Colosse, it has been supposed that Epaphras had a principal share in the work. Paul speaks of the Colossians as having heard of the grace of God in truth from Epaphras, and calls him his dear fellow-servant and their faithful minister (Col. i. 7, 8). If this supposition be correct, then it is altogether probable that Epaphras may have come in contact with Paul and been converted to Christianity during his three years' residence in Ephesus, recorded in Acts xix. But

95. *Writes the Epistle to the Colossians.*

* That the letter was written from Rome at the time we have assigned may be shown thus:—At the time of writing it the apostle was a prisoner (ver. 1), but had hopes of a speedy liberation (ver. 22). This he could not have had during his two years' imprisonment in Cesarea, especially after his appeal to Cæsar. Nor was it written during his second imprisonment; for we find, among others, Demas and Mark with him when he wrote it, but at the date of his second imprisonment Demas had forsaken him (2 Tim. iv. 10), and Mark was in the East (2 Tim. iv. 11).

however this may be, we know that the members of the church of Colosse were distinguished for their faith in Christ, and their love to all the saints (Col. i. 4). But while such was their general condition, Epaphras, who had come to Rome, on what errand we do not know, and who would seem to have been thrown into prison there (Philem. 23),* reported to the apostle that various errors of an exceedingly subtle and dangerous nature had made their appearance. Asceticism had begun to assume the place of that Christian freedom which Christ had purchased for his people, and the purity of their worship was in danger of being disturbed by some who inculcated a voluntary humility and a worshipping of angels (Col. ii. 16-19). It is manifest from the whole strain of the epistle, that the teachers who taught these false doctrines belonged to that same party of Judaisers who had already wrought such havoc in the neighbouring churches of Galatia. In order to counteract these tendencies, the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Colossians, and sent it by the hands of Tychicus, the Ephesian (Col. iv. 7, 8). "The occasion, then, of the epistle being the existence and influence of these false teachers in the Colossian church, the object of the apostle was to set before them their real standing in Christ, the majesty of his person, and the completeness of his redemption, and to exhort them to conformity with their risen Lord; following this out into all the subordinate duties and occasions of common life." †

Tychicus, the bearer of the Epistle to the Colossians, was, as we have seen, a native of Ephesus, and the apostle
 96. *Writes the Epistle to the Ephesians.* embraced the opportunity of his return to his native place of sending along with him a letter to the Ephesians (Eph. vi. 21, 22). This letter bears a striking resemblance to that to the Colossians, not only in regard to subject and style, but even in the very words employed, and

* But see remarks, p. 178, as to the meaning of the expression, "fellow-prisoner."

† Alford. The reasoning employed in proving the date of the Epistle to Philemon may be employed in reference to the Epistle to the Colossians. Paul was a prisoner (Col. iv. 3). The epistle was sent by Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus (Col. iv. 7-9), who bore the letter to Philemon, which we have shown to have been sent from Rome. If the Epistle to Philemon was sent from Rome, so must that to the Colossians.

the order in which the thoughts follow each other. This resemblance, which even the most casual reader cannot fail to notice, makes it manifest, even were there no other grounds for the belief, that the two letters were written about one and the same time.* But while this much is admitted on all hands, considerable doubt has been raised whether the epistle, which bears to have been addressed to the Ephesians, was in reality addressed to that church. This doubt arises partly from the absence of all personal salutations in an epistle written to a church with which Paul was so long and so intimately connected, and partly from the absence in some manuscripts of the expression, “which are in Ephesus,” in the first verse of the first chapter. For three years the apostle laboured in Ephesus, and it is considered inconceivable that in writing to the church in that city he should send no personal greetings. But an examination of the other letters of Paul will show that he was by no means in the habit of sending personal salutations to churches with which he was at least as well acquainted as with that of Ephesus; and to build conclusions on such slender grounds appears unjustifiable.† The absence in some manuscripts of the words in the first verse already referred to, has led some to entertain the idea that in all probability this letter was of the nature of a circular one, several copies of which were made for the use of different churches respectively. When a copy was sent to any particular church, the name of that church was inserted in the beginning; and as Ephesus was a city of great consequence, having intimate relations with the rest of the Roman world, it would be altogether likely that copies of the epistle in question would emanate from that city in greater abundance than from any other church to which they had been sent. These copies would naturally contain the omitted words, and in this way the epistle would gradually come to be known

* For a detailed comparison of the two epistles, the reader is referred to Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*. One or two examples may be given. Compare Eph. i. 7 with Col. i. 14; Eph. i. 10 with Col. i. 20; Eph. v. 22-33, vi. 1-9 (omitting verses 23, 24, and from the first clause of ver. 25 to ver. 33) with Col. iii. 18-25; iv. 1.

† No salutations are sent to the Philippians, to the Thessalonians, nor to the Corinthians, all churches with which he was intimately acquainted. Very many are sent to the Romans, whom he had never visited when he wrote them.

as the Epistle to the Ephesians. Some countenance is given to this view from the fact that in the Epistle to the Colossians mention is made of an Epistle to the Laodiceans (Col. iv. 16), which is supposed to be the same as that now known as the Epistle to the Ephesians, and to have been indeed the copy of that letter addressed to the church in Laodicea. But the arguments adduced in favour of this view do not seem sufficient to overturn the all but unanimous opinion of the Church in all ages ; and, accordingly, we believe that the epistle under consideration was actually addressed exclusively to the church in Ephesus, and that the letter to the Laodiceans, to which reference has been made, has not been preserved.* We have already mentioned that the departure of Tychicus from Rome to Ephesus was probably the main reason which induced the apostle to write this epistle, and that it was composed about the same time as that to the Colossians. We have no sufficient data whereby we may determine which was first written. We might probably infer that the composition of the letter to the Colossians was prior to that of the Epistle to the Ephesians, from the fact that the latter in many parts contains expanded statements of the topics treated of in the former. It cannot be denied, however, that on purely literary grounds, the condensation appearing in the Epistle to the Colossians may be advanced as a proof of its having been written after the more expanded Epistle to the Ephesians.

From the statements advanced in the preceding paragraphs, it will be evident that the three letters which we have just been considering were written and despatched about one and the same time. A little examination will also convince us that their composition must be assigned to a date not long after the commencement of the imprisonment recorded in Acts xxviii. In all of them the apostle speaks hopefully of his prospects. He evidently expects a favourable issue of his case, and in the Epistle to Philemon

97. Writes the Epistle to the Philippians. * For a full statement of the arguments in favour of both sides of this question, the reader is referred to Alford's prolegomena to the epistle, and to Conybeare and Howson's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. ii. pp. 405-408.

(ver. 22) he requests that a lodging be provided for him, as he had the confident expectation of being able, at no distant day, to pay a visit to Colosse. These circumstances exactly coincide with what we learn from the Acts of the nature of his imprisonment, at least in its earlier stages (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). But in the Epistle to the Philippians we find him expressing grave anxiety as to what may befall him. He is in a strait betwixt two, and indicates in no ambiguous terms the probability of his blood being poured out as a libation upon the sacrifice of their faith (Phil. ii. 17). He would fain send Timothy to visit the church in Philippi, but he is unwilling to do so until he shall see how it will go with himself (Phil. ii. 23). These allusions all point to some change for the worse in his condition ; and when we look for some corresponding change in the aspect with which the government of Rome regarded the Christians, we find sufficient ground to justify the apostle's apprehensions. Burrus, the prefect, died A.D. 62, and was succeeded by the infamous Tigellinus. Nero from that time began that course of crime which has covered his name with everlasting disgrace. Octavia, his wife, was divorced, and Poppea, a Jewish proselyte, who would bear no goodwill to the Christians, became queen. All these changes might well fill the apostle's mind with that anxiety which makes itself manifest in the Epistle to the Philippians. It thus becomes evident that the composition of this epistle must have been at a somewhat later date than that of the three previously mentioned ; and this conclusion is further strengthened by one or two facts recorded in the epistle. His imprisonment had been sufficiently long to enable his bonds to be known in all the palace * (Phil. i. 13), and many members of the imperial household had embraced Christianity (Phil. iv. 22). Again, we learn from the epistle that intelligence of Paul's imprisonment had reached Philippi ; that Epaphroditus had been despatched from that town to Rome with a contribution, and that upon his arrival he had been seized with dangerous illness ; that news of his sickness had reached Philippi, and that a message had been sent to Rome inquiring

* *Prætorium.*

after him (Phil. ii. 25-30 compared with chap. iv. 10-18). Now, it is evident that "the passing and repassing of these advices must necessarily have occupied a long portion of time,"* especially when we consider the difficulty of communication in that age, and the great distance between Philippi and Rome. From all the facts mentioned, we are fully justified in placing the composition of this epistle towards the close of the imprisonment recorded in the Acts. The occasion of writing it was briefly this: The Philippians, having heard of the apostle's imprisonment in Rome, had made a contribution for his wants (Phil. iv. 14), which they forwarded by Epaphroditus (Phil. iv. 18). Epaphroditus was seized in Rome with dangerous illness (Phil. ii. 27); and the Philippians, who had been informed of this (Phil. ii. 26), were naturally deeply concerned. Paul had intended to send Timothy to visit the Philippian Church, but could not do so at that particular time (Phil. ii. 19-23); and in order to relieve their minds of all anxiety regarding Epaphroditus, he resolved on sending him home at once, now that he was convalescent (Phil. ii. 28). He sends this epistle along with him, in which he enters with considerable minuteness into his present condition, warns them of the Judaising teachers, and, from an overflowing heart, pours out his gratitude to them in terms of the tenderest affection.

* Paley.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION.

A.D. 63-67.

We have seen, from the Epistle to the Philippians, that Paul entertained considerable doubt regarding the issue of his trial before Nero. With the hints thus furnished by that epistle, all certainty regarding the remainder of the apostle's life vanishes. We cannot determine, with any approach to that accuracy which would set the question at rest, whether he was acquitted or condemned. The evidence on this point is of such a problematic nature as to leave room for very considerable difference of opinion; and accordingly, in modern more than in ancient times, opinion has been much divided. Many, and these by no means men whose views are to be lightly set aside, hold that Paul was never liberated from the imprisonment which we considered in last chapter; while others, equally capable of forming a correct judgment, maintain that his appeal to Rome issued in his acquittal and liberation, and that after a considerable interval of liberty he was again arrested and condemned. Believing that this latter view fits better with the facts of the case, we proceed to give a brief outline of the evidence on which it is based; and thereafter we shall endeavour to weave into a connected narrative the few hints which Scripture supplies of the apostle's proceedings during this interval of liberty.

We have first the remarkable unanimity of the ancient Church on this point. This unanimity cannot be held as having foreclosed all investigation into the subject, but it is

of importance as containing the view of those who lived nearest

99. *Evidence of early Church in favour of his acquittal.* the apostolic age, and who may thus be supposed to have had sources of information from which we are now debarred. It is not within the scope of this work to give in detail the evidence of this unanimity; we can merely give the result. Clement of Rome, commonly designated the first bishop of that city, who is supposed to be the person mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians (Phil. iv. 3); Eusebius, the Church historian; Chrysostom, and Jerome, all mention, either expressly or by implication, the fact of the apostle's release as a matter on which they entertained no doubt. Some of those whom we have just named distinctly declare that he accomplished the purpose expressed in his Epistle to the Romans (chap. xv. 24), and paid a visit to Spain in the interval between his two imprisonments. In a word, the evidence of the primitive Church all points in one direction.

The evidence to be gathered from the Pastoral Epistles is

100. *The Pastoral Epistles favour the view of his acquittal.* strongly corroborative of what we have stated to be the opinion of the early Church. Those who deny the genuineness of these epistles find it easy to escape from the evidence they furnish; but those who hold them to be the veritable writings of Paul, are compelled to adopt the view we are upholding, or else to have recourse to far more improbable suppositions with the view of explaining away the statements to be found in them. Assuming—which is, after all, no assumption, but the all but unanimous belief of the Church in all ages—that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, we shall now inquire what light they throw upon the question under discussion.

In the First Epistle to Timothy we read, “As I besought

101. *The historical circumstances mentioned in the Pastoral Epistles are in favour of his acquittal.* thee to abide in Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia” (chap. i. 3). If there was only one Roman imprisonment, this must have happened during that portion of the apostle's life covered by the Acts of the Apostles. Luke records two visits to Ephesus—the first a very hurried one at

the close of the second missionary tour, when Paul was on his way from Greece to Syria (Acts xviii. 18-21). It is manifest that the circumstances of this visit will not suit those of that in our epistle. The second visit is that recorded in Acts xix., which lasted for a period of three years (Acts xx. 31). On that occasion the apostle, on leaving Ephesus, went into Macedonia (Acts xx. 1); but he did not leave Timothy behind him: for in Acts xix. 22 we read that, before his own departure from Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia; and from the First Epistle to the Corinthians, written, as we have seen, from Ephesus soon after he had sent the two disciples away, we learn that he expected Timothy to visit the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xvi. 10). It may be said that Timothy returned to Ephesus before the apostle departed from it, and that thus he might be left there. But if he did so return, his stay must have been very short, for we find him with Paul in Macedonia after a very brief interval (2 Cor. i. 1), and he continued with the apostle during the remainder of that journey until his return into Asia (Acts xx. 4). Now, the whole strain of the First Epistle to Timothy makes it perfectly clear that the stay in Ephesus therein contemplated could have been of no such transient nature as this hypothesis assumes. It was the very uncertainty of the length of time Timothy might be obliged to continue in Ephesus that led the apostle to pen his first letter to him (1 Tim. iii. 14, 15). It thus appears almost certain that the circumstances referred to in the passage of the epistle now under consideration could not have happened during any portion of the time covered by the history in the Acts; and if so, then we must refer them to a time subsequent to the imprisonment recorded in Acts xxviii. There is one objection to this view, which must be noticed. It assumes that, in the interval between the two imprisonments, the apostle visited Ephesus. This is supposed to militate against the statement in Acts xx. 25, where the apostle in his address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus says—"I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." How, it is asked, is it possible to reconcile this state-

ment with the fact of a subsequent visit to Ephesus? But the objection proceeds on a misinterpretation of the passage. We have no reason to believe that the apostle was speaking with absolute prophetic certainty. Indeed, in the context, he distinctly intimates that he did not know the things which were to befall him, and it would seem natural to take the words under consideration as designed to express the exceeding unlikelihood of his ever having another opportunity of addressing the whole body of the Ephesian elders.* And so the objection falls to the ground. We might refer to other passages in these epistles which will not fall in with the view that there was only one imprisonment. In 2 Tim. iv. 20 we read, "Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." Trophimus is not found in Paul's company until the time of his third missionary tour (Acts xx. 4). But we know that he did not leave Trophimus at Miletus on that occasion, for we find him with Paul in Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 29), and it will be difficult to find any time before the first Roman imprisonment which the circumstance here referred to will suit, except on hypotheses much more unlikely than that which we are endeavouring to establish. From the investigation thus instituted, and which might be pursued to a much greater length, we believe we are warranted in concluding that the historical circumstances referred to in the Pastoral Epistles render it altogether probable that the apostle was liberated from the imprisonment recorded in the Acts.

The same conclusion may be drawn from the notices occurring in these epistles regarding the heresies prevalent when they were written. It is manifest that when Paul wrote the First Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, he was at liberty; and accordingly, on the supposition that there was only one imprisonment, they must have been written

102. *The notices of heresies in the Pastoral Epistles are in favour of his acquittal.*

* Alford well remarks, that if the "I KNOW, *οἶδα*," of Acts xx. 25, is to be taken as expressive of actual prophetic foreknowledge, then the "I KNOW, *οἶδα*," of Phil. i. 25, uttered towards the close of his first Roman imprisonment, must have the same force, and so the one passage neutralises the other.

before his apprehension in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts xxi. But, a short time before this apprehension, the apostle had spent three years in Ephesus, and in the record of that residence not one word is said of heresies or of heretical teaching. Nay, a very few weeks before his apprehension, we find him saying to the elders at Ephesus, “I know this, that *after* my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” (Acts xx. 29, 30). This passage makes it abundantly clear that, at the time referred to, heresy had made little progress, and, if existing at all, it was only in the bud. So that, during the time which the one imprisonment theory allows for the composition of these letters, we find few or no traces of heresy or of heretical teaching in the Ephesian Church. But when we turn to the letters themselves, a very different scene presents itself. Heresy is rife; heretical teachers are busy subverting the souls of believers (1 Tim. i. 4-7, 19, 20; vi, 20, 21; Tit. i. 10, 11; iii. 9-11). And not only so, but it has been well remarked, the heresies of these epistles are of a much more advanced type than any which meet us in the epistles known to have been written before the close of the history in the Acts. This will be manifest to any one who traces the rise and progress of the heresies of the apostolic age, as detailed in the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Colossians, and to the Philippians, and in those now under consideration. The errors against which the apostle warns these churches are essentially of the Judaising type. In the Epistle to the Colossians we do find faint traces (Col. ii. 18) of the heresies which appear in the Pastoral Epistles; but in the latter they have attained a maturity which indicates that a considerable interval must have elapsed between the writing of the two sets of epistles in question. We are confident that a careful examination of this subject will convince the candid inquirer that the Pastoral Epistles, in speaking of false teaching, refer to a time considerably posterior to the imprisonment of Paul recorded in the Acts; and if so, seeing the apostle was at liberty when he wrote two of them, they

must have been written after his liberation from that imprisonment.

The like inference may be drawn from the hints which these epistles furnish of the state of Church organisation existing at the time when they were written, and from the remarkable divergence both in style and diction which they exhibit from the other letters of Paul. In regard to the first of these points, it may be noticed that the particular directions given regarding the choice of men to act as office-bearers in the different churches imply that these churches had existed for a considerable time—long enough to enable the character of aspirants to the holy office to be thoroughly tested. And in regard to the second, it is only necessary to read the letters carefully to be convinced that they do not belong to the same period as that which produced the letters of the first imprisonment.

103. The state of Church organisation detailed in, as well as the language of, the Pastoral Epistles in favour of his acquittal.

We find in them a number of expressions occurring nowhere else in Paul's writings, and the use of which can be satisfactorily accounted for only on the supposition, that the growing wants of the Church had pressed into her service new forms of expression, which were not required in the earlier stages of her history. The early language of the Church, like the early language of the individual, expressed feeling more than the results of formal judgment. On this supposition, which the subsequent development of ecclesiastical language greatly tends to corroborate, the presence in these epistles of the forms of expression of which we speak is a strong presumptive proof that their composition must be assigned to a date considerably posterior to that of those in which such forms are not found. Now such forms do not meet us in the letters to the Colossians, the Ephesians, and to the Philippians, all of which were written, as we have already seen, during the first imprisonment; and, accordingly, we are driven to the conclusion that a somewhat considerable interval must have elapsed between their composition and that of the Pastoral Epistles.

It thus becomes highly evident, both from the testimony of antiquity and from the internal evidence furnished by the

Pastoral Epistles, that Paul's appeal to Rome was sustained, and that, on the hearing of his case before the Emperor, he was acquitted and discharged. This discharge must have taken place somewhere in A.D. 63, and it becomes of interest to ascertain how long he enjoyed his liberty. There is a well-authenticated tradition that he suffered martyrdom shortly before the close of Nero's reign—that is, about A.D. 67. This will allow an interval of rather more than three years, during which the apostle was at liberty—an interval amply sufficient to cover the various journeys hinted at in the Pastoral Epistles. It only now remains that we endeavour to follow the apostle in these journeys; but this is by no means an easy task, and we can undertake only to give a probable account of the order in which he visited the various localities specified in the letters.

After his liberation he would, in all likelihood, carry out his intention of visiting Philippi and Colosse

(Phil. ii. 24; Philem. 22). In company with Timothy, whom we know to have been with him

104. *Paul was liberated from the imprisonment recorded in the Acts.*

in Rome during his first imprisonment, he left that city and journeyed eastward. Passing through Macedonia, and paying a visit to Philippi, he crossed into Asia Minor, and, in all probability, made Ephesus his headquarters, from which he could easily pay the promised visit to Philemon in Colosse. How long he remained in Ephesus on this occasion we cannot tell, but we gather from the First Epistle to Timothy that he had not come a day too soon. Various forms of error had sprung up in his absence, and had assumed such proportions that even the presence of the apostle, who had founded the Church, was unable to effect their complete eradication. Accordingly, when he was obliged to leave the city, he judged it prudent to leave Timothy behind him (1 Tim. i. 3), with the express view "that he might charge some to teach no other doctrine."* The apostle himself proceeded to Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3), intending to return after a brief interval (1 Tim. iii. 14). But it would seem that, on his arrival in Macedonia,

105. *Paul visits Ephesus--Writes the First Epistle to Timothy.*

* Ἐτεροδιδασχαλεῖν.

circumstances occurred which rendered a speedy return to Ephesus a matter of uncertainty (1 Tim. iii. 15). Remembering, therefore, the bold and unscrupulous character of the false teachers of Ephesus, and the comparative inexperience of the young minister (1 Tim. iv. 12), whom he had left in charge of the Church, he wrote and sent off from Macedonia the First Epistle to Timothy, in which he gives full and particular instructions regarding the conduct of public worship, the choice of office-bearers in the Church, the admission of widows into the list of those to be supported by the Church, and the relation of slaves to their masters. Along with these instructions, he warns him against the false teachers, and calls upon him to act with vigour and decision in the discharge of the important duties intrusted to his care.

It is probable that, after leaving Macedonia, the apostle,

106. *Paul visits Crete.—Writes the Epistle to Titus.* in accordance with his expressed intention (1 Tim. iii. 14), returned to Ephesus by way of

Troas, leaving there the cloak and parchment which, at a subsequent period, he requested Timothy to bring with him to Rome (2 Tim. iv. 13). From Ephesus he may have gone to Crete, where he left Titus (Titus i. 5), and thereafter returned to Asia Minor. We have no definite information regarding the planting of the Cretan churches. The gospel was, in all likelihood, first preached in Crete by converts from Judea, for Cretans are mentioned among those who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 11). The Epistle to Titus makes it clear that, at the time of Paul's visit to the island, the churches had been in existence for some considerable time, although in a somewhat disorganised condition (Titus i. 5). Already false teachers had arisen, and Titus was left for the express purpose of setting in order the things which were wanting, and of ordaining elders in every city. His stay was not to be of long continuance, for we find the apostle requesting him, on the arrival of Artemas in Crete, to join him in Nicopolis, where he intended to winter (Titus iii. 12). But although his residence in the island was to be short, his duties called for the exercise of much wisdom and discretion, and accordingly

Paul wrote, probably in Asia Minor, and sent to him, the letter which bears his name, in which he gives him directions almost identical with those given to Timothy, intermingled with special warnings adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the Cretan churches.

Leaving Asia Minor, the apostle would seem to have gone by way of Miletus to Corinth (2 Tim. iv. 20), leaving Trophimus, whose health gave way, in the former city ; while Erastus abode in Corinth, of which city he was a native (Rom. xvi. 23).

107. *Paul again a prisoner.—Writes the second Epistle to Timothy.*

From Corinth he would naturally pass to Nicopolis (Titus iii. 12), a city lying on the western shore of Epirus. We have no further mention of his proceedings until we find him again a prisoner in Rome. He may have visited Spain, as he had purposed (Rom. xv. 24), but this is uncertain. It seems altogether likely that, being apprehended in Nicopolis as a well-known leader of the Christians, he was sent to Rome and thrown into prison. His imprisonment was evidently severe, and it was dangerous in any person to avow himself his friend. The Christians at this time were subjected to a bitter persecution. Nero had set fire to Rome, and, to avert suspicion from himself, laid the blame of the conflagration on the Christians, on whom he inflicted the most inhuman tortures.* On the occasion of the apostle's first appearance before the Emperor, no man stood by him (2 Tim. iv. 16). The times were sifting, and many of those who had been his companions in former

* Tacitus, after describing the fire, thus proceeds: "Sed non ope humana, non largitionibus principis aut deum placamentis decedebat infamia, quin jussum incendium crederetur. Ergo abolendo rumor Nero subdidit reos, et quæsitissimis poenis affectit, quos per flagitia inquisitos, vulgus Christianos appellabat. Auctor nominis ejus Christus, Tiberio imperante, per procuratoram Pontium Pilatum, suppicio affectus erat. Repressaque in præsens exitiabilis superstitionis rursus erumpet, non modo per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocias aut pudenda confluent celebranturque. Igitur primo corupti, qui fatebantur, deinde, indicio eorum, multitudine ingens, haud perinde in criminis incendiis, quam odio humani generis, convicti sunt. Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque, ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. Hortos suos ei spectaculo Nero obtulerat, et circense ludicrum edebat, habitu aurigæ permixtus plebi, vel curriculo insistens. Unde, quanquam adversus sontes et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, sed in sævitiam unius absumerentur."—*Annal. xv. 44.*

days had now deserted him. Demas had forsaken him, through love of this present world; Crescens had gone to Galatia, and Titus into Dalmatia (2 Tim. iv. 10). Luke, his tried and trusty friend, could not be driven from his side (2 Tim. iv. 11). The desertion of so many, and the sense of loneliness which he experienced, made him exceedingly desirous to have his dear son Timothy once more beside him, before the end came. But he was uncertain whether Timothy could reach Rome in time to comfort him in his dungeon, and especially to receive the parting words of counsel which he would fain address to him, and so he accompanied the invitation given to him to come to Rome, with a letter, full of the warmest expressions of attachment, and containing many precious warnings to guide him in the troublous times that were coming on. This letter, full of human interest, and vividly calling up before us Paul the aged feeling the cold of winter in his Roman prison (2 Tim. iv. 13), possesses for the Church a peculiar interest, as being the last which the apostle ever wrote.

Whether Timothy was able to reach Rome before the apostle's death we cannot determine. We may be sure
108. *Martyrdom of Paul.* he would consider Paul's request a sacred charge, and would lose no time in sending for Mark (2 Tim. iv. 11), who was likely in Colosse (Col. iv. 10), and setting out for Rome. But at this point the curtain falls, and our information stops. We only know that the apostle, having fought a good fight, having finished his course, and having kept the faith, died a martyr's death; and so, after the toils and conflicts of life, entered on his eternal rest, and received that crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, had laid up for him who had loved his appearing so well (2 Tim. iv. 8).

GAZETTEER OF PLACES.

The references, except when otherwise mentioned, are to the Acts of the Apostles, and embrace the chief places where the names occur. For much of the information contained in these notices, the author is indebted to Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

ACHAIA, originally a narrow strip of country upon the northern coast of the Peloponnesus, but, in the New Testament, it embraced the whole of the Morea and the greater part of Greece proper, with the adjacent islands. Along with Macedonia it comprehended the whole of Greece (xviii. 12, 27; xix. 21).

ADRAMYTTIUM, a sea-port in the province of Asia, situated in Mysia (xxvii. 2).

ADRIA, the name originally given to the northern part of the Adriatic, but afterwards extended so as to embrace the whole sea that washes the west coast of Greece (xxvii. 27).

ALEXANDRIA, a city of Egypt, founded by and named after Alexander the Great. Large numbers of Jews resided in the town. The Septuagint version of the Old Testament was made here, and Alexandria exerted a powerful influence on the early history of Christianity. It was the point of departure for the Egyptian corn-ships, when proceeding to Rome (vi. 9; xviii. 24; xxvii. 6; xxviii. 11).

AMPHIPOLIS, a city of Macedonia, about 33 Roman miles from Philippi: called Amphipolis because the River Strymon flowed almost round the town (xvii. 1).

ANTIOCH (in Pisidia), a town of Asia Minor, in the district of Pisidia. It was founded by Seleucus Nicanor, and was a Roman *colonia* (xiii. 14; xiv. 19; 2 Tim. iii. 11).

ANTIOCH (in Syria), the capital of the later Syrian kingdom, and in the time of the Romans the residence of the governors of the province of Syria, lay on the River Orontes, at a point where the Lebanon and Taurus mountains meet. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor, and called Antioch in honour of his father Antiochus. Under the Romans it ranked next in importance to Rome and Alexandria. It played an important part in the history of Christianity, and was the headquarters, during the first century, of missions to the Gentiles. It was noted for its licentiousness, and the inhabitants are said to have been notorious for the scurrility of their wit and the invention of nicknames. It contains at present about 10,000 inhabitants (vi. 5; xi. 19; xiii. xv. &c.)

ANTIPATRIS lay between Jerusalem and Cæsarea, its exact site has not been fixed; it was about 26 Roman miles from Cæsarea (xxiii. 31).

APOLLONIA, a city of Macedonia, 30 miles from Amphipolis, and 37 from Thessalonica (xvii. 1).

APPII FORUM, a well-known station on the Appian Way, the road which ran from Rome to Naples. It was 43 miles from Rome (xxviii. 15).

ARABIA, a country of Asia (ii. 11; Gal. i. 17).

AREOPAGUS, or **MARS' HILL**, was a rocky height in Athens, opposite the western end of the Acropolis. It was the place of meeting of the council of Areopagus, the highest court in Athens. The word has thus two meanings, the council and its place of meeting, xvii. 19, 22, where, although our version gives *Areopagus* in the one place and *Mars' Hill* in the other, the words in the original are the same in both places, and refer exclusively to the place, and not to the court.

ASIA. In New Testament language, Asia is never used to describe what we now term the continent of Asia, nor yet even as descriptive of Asia Minor. It is employed always to describe the Roman province of Asia, or Proconsular Asia. This province lay on the western side of Asia Minor, and bordered on the Archipelago. It embraced more or less the ancient divisions of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria—Ephesus was the capital. The exact limits of the province have never been accurately determined. It was governed by a proconsul (see Acts xix. 38, where the town-clerk of Ephesus speaks of “deputies”—it is uncertain why he uses the word in the plural)—(ii. 9; vi. 9; xvi. 6; xix. 10, 22, 26, 27, 31; xx. 4, 16; xxiv. 18; xxvii. 2).

ASSOS, a sea-port of Proconsular Asia, in the ancient division of Mysia. It lay on the northern shore of the Gulf of Adramyttium, 20 miles from Troas (xx. 13, 14). In Acts xxvii. 13, we have the expression *ἀσσον παρελέγοντο*, rendered in the Vulgate “cum sustulissent de Asson.” It is now allowed that in this passage *ἀσσον* is an adverb.

ATHENS, “the eye of Greece, mother of Arts and Eloquence,” the capital of ancient Attica, lay close to the Gulf of *Ægina*, a part of the Archipelago. It was the centre of Greek civilisation and learning, and continued, long after its political influence was gone, the great resort of philosophers and learned men in general. “Four hills of moderate height rise within the walls of the city. Of these, one to the north-east is the celebrated Acropolis, or citadel, being a square craggy rock about 150 feet high. Immediately to the west of the Acropolis is a second hill, of irregular form, but inferior height, called the Areopagus. To the south-west rises a third hill, the Pynx, on which the assemblies of the citizens were held; and to the south of the latter is a fourth hill, known as the Museum. The Agora, or ‘market,’ where Paul disputed daily, was situated in the valley between the Acropolis, the Areopagus, the Pynx, and the Museum”* (xvii. 15, 16; 1 Thess. iii. 1).

ATTALIA, a town on the coast of Pamphylia, still existing under the name of *Satalia* (xiv. 25).

AZOTUS, otherwise known as Ashdod, one of the five Philistine cities, nominally in the tribe of Judah. It still exists under the name of *Esdud* (viii. 40).

* Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

BABYLON, the capital of Chaldea, situated on the Euphrates (vii. 43).

BEREA, a city of Macedonia, lying on the eastern slope of the range of Olympus, and connected in ancient times by a good road with Thessalonica. It is now called *Verria*, and contains from 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants (xvii. 10; xx. 4).

BITHYNIA, a province of Asia Minor, on the west contiguous to Asia, while the eastern boundary was never well defined. On the north it bordered on the Black Sea. It was a proconsular province until the time of the Emperor Hadrian. It is famous in early Church history in connection with the persecution of the Christians, which called forth Pliny's celebrated letter to Trajan (xvi. 7).

CÆSAREA, PALESTINÆ, one of the most important towns in Palestine, on the Mediterranean, on the line of the great road from Tyre to Egypt, about 70 Roman miles from Jerusalem, 36 from Ptolemais, and 30 from Joppa. It was built by Herod the Great as a means of keeping up his communication with Rome. He constructed a large harbour, which he protected from the sea by a vast breakwater, curved round to the south-west, leaving only an opening to the harbour on the north. Before this time, Joppa (*q.v.*) was the only harbour on that part of the coast. It was called Cæsarea by Herod, in honour of Caesar Augustus. It was made a *colonia* by Vespasian. It was the residence of the Roman procurators, and the headquarters of the military forces of the province. It occupied an important place in the early history of Christianity (viii. 40; ix. 30; x. 1, 24; xi. 11; xii. 19; xviii. 22; xxi. 8, 16; xxiii. 23, 33; xxv. 1, 4, 6, 13).

CAPPADOCIA, a province of Asia Minor, embracing Cappadocia proper and Armenia Minor. It was the most easterly district of Asia Minor (ii. 9).

CENCHREA, one of the harbours of Corinth, on the east, on the Saronic Gulf; as Lecheum, the other harbour, was on the west, on the Corinthian Gulf. By Cenchrea, Corinth had easy communication with Asia Minor, Syria, Macedonia, &c. (xviii. 18; Rom. xvi. 1).

CHALDEA, a district in the valley of the Euphrates, generally the same as Mesopotamia (vii. 4).

CHANAAN, New Testament form of Canaan (vii. 11).

CHARRAN, New Testament form of Haran (vii. 2).

CHIOS, an island in the Archipelago, near the coast of Asia Minor, lying south of Lesbos. It is about 32 miles in length, and from 8 to 18 in breadth. It is mountainous, and has always been noted for its fertility. Its modern name is *Scio* (xx. 15).

CILICIA, a maritime province in the south-east of Asia Minor. It touched Syria on the east, from which it was separated by Mons Amanus. Pamphylia was on the west, and Lycaonia and Cappadocia on the north. There was easy communication between it and Syria by a road passing along the bay of Issus; hence the close connection between these two provinces, as indicated in the Acts. The western portion was mountainous, and was called Trachea, or *rough*; while the eastern portion called Pechias, or the *level*, was celebrated for its beauty, fertility, and luxurious climate. Tarsus was its capital (vi. 9; xv. 23; xxi. 39; xxvii. 5).

CLAUDA, a small island in the Mediterranean, lying to the south of Crete.

It lay nearly due west of Cape Matala, and nearly due south of Phenice. It is still called by the Greeks *Clauda-nesa*, which the Italians have corrupted into *Gozzo* (xxvii. 16).

CNIDUS, a city of Asia Minor, in the ancient division of Caria, and occupying the extreme south-west point of the peninsula. The remains still testify to the size and magnificence of the ancient city. It was 130 geographical miles from Myra, hence Paul's vessel must have experienced contrary winds on leaving the latter city, as it took many days to go from Myra to Cnidus (xxvii. 7).

COLOSSE, a city of Asia Minor, situated on the River Lycus, an affluent of the Maeander, described by Herodotus and Xenophon as a large and flourishing city, although afterwards it declined in importance. The road from Ephesus to the Euphrates passed close by it, and thus communication between Ephesus and Colosse was easy. Paul does not seem to have visited it previous to his first imprisonment (Col. ii. 1). He did so in all likelihood in the interval between his two imprisonments (Philem. 22). The word does not occur in the Acts.

COOS, an island of the Archipelago, near the coast of Asia Minor, lying between Miletus and Rhodes. From its position at the entrance to the Archipelago from the east, it was an island of considerable importance (xxi. 1).

CORINTH, one of the most celebrated cities in Greece. It lay on the neck of land (isthmus) that joins northern and southern Greece, and nearly midway between the Saronic and the Corinthian gulfs; hence called "Corinth of the two seas" (Horace); "the bridge of the sea" (Pindar); "the gate of the Peloponnesus" (Xenophon). From its geographical position, it was a city of great importance. By its two harbours it had communication with the Archipelago and the Adriatic, while by land it was the key of southern Greece. It was thus important both in a military and commercial point of view. It was destroyed by the Roman consul Mummius, B.C. 146, but rose from its ruins after an interval of nearly one hundred years, and the new city almost rivalled the old. It was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, and the usual residence of the proconsul. Corinth was noted for its profligacy, so much so that a verb was coined from its name (*κοπινθεῖσομαι*), which meant "to play the wanton;" and it was a common proverb, "Non cuvis contigit Corinthum adire,"—which implies that it was unsafe and costly too to go to Corinth (xviii. 1; xix. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 20).

CRETE, a large island in the Mediterranean, closing in the Archipelago on the south, 140 miles in length between its extreme eastern and western points. Its breadth is small. It is a bold, mountainous island, but possessed of many beautiful and fertile valleys, and celebrated in early times for its hundred cities. It is famous in the early mythology and history of Greece, but of no importance in its later history. Jews were numerous in the island, and it is exceedingly probable that Christianity was first introduced into it by Jews who were at Jerusalem at Pentecost. Paul does not seem to have visited it previous to his arrest in Jerusalem. He spent a short time in the island in the interval between his two imprisonments (Titus i. 5; Acts ii. 11; xxvii. 7).

CYPRUS, an island in the extreme eastern corner of the Mediterranean,

lying in that part formed by the approach of the coast lines of Syria and of Cilicia, about 140 miles in length, and varying in breadth from 50 to 5 miles. Two ranges of hills, nearly parallel, ran from east to west along the northern and southern shores respectively. Between these two ranges lay a rich and fertile valley, having Salamis at the east extremity, and Paphos on the west. Cyprus was made a Roman province B.C. 58; at first an imperial one—hence attempts have been made to convict Luke of inaccuracy, for he calls Sergius Paulus the *deputy* of Cyprus, which clearly implies that, at the time to which he refers, it was a proconsular or senatorial province. But we know on the most undoubted authority that Cyprus was afterwards made by Augustus a senatorial province, so that the language of Luke is thoroughly accurate. It was the birth-place of Barnabas and Mnason (iv. 36; xi. 19; xiii. 4; xv. 39; xxi. 3; xxvii. 4).

CYRENE, the principal city of that part of northern Africa which lay along the south shore of the Mediterranean, between the territory of Carthage and Egypt, a district nearly corresponding to the modern Tripoli. It was a Greek city though situated in Africa, and contained large numbers of Jews (ii. 10; vi. 9; xi. 20; xiii. 1).

DALMATIA, a mountainous district on the east coast of the Adriatic, forming part of the Roman province of Illyricum (2 Tim. iv. 10).

DAMASCUS, one of the oldest cities in the world, mentioned as a well-known place in the time of Abraham, and existing to this day as a town of very considerable importance. It was situated on the rivers Abana and Pharpar, in the midst of an extensive plain, and was long the capital of Syria. In the time of Paul it formed part of the dominions of Aretas (2 Cor. xi. 32), king of Arabia, who held his kingdom from the Romans. The street called "Straight" still exists (ix. 2, 8, 10, 19, 22; Gal. i. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 32).

DERBE, a town of Asia Minor, in the district of Lycaonia. Its exact site cannot now be fixed with anything like certainty (xiv. 6; xx. 4).

EGYPT, one of the great divisions of Africa, whose history continually touches that of the Jews in the Old Testament. It is altogether unimportant in the history of the Acts (ii. 10; vii. 9, &c.).

ELAM, a province of the kingdom of Persia (ii. 9).

EPHESUS, one of the most famous cities in Asia Minor, nearly opposite the Island of Samos, lying about the middle of the western coast of Asia Minor, and the capital of the Roman proconsular province of Asia. It was situated on the River Cayster, which ran into the Archipelago nearly midway between the larger streams, the Hermus and the Maeander; the former having Smyrna near its mouth, and the latter Miletus. It was most conveniently situated for trade both by sea and land. By sea it had communication with all the ports on both sides of the Archipelago, while by land it was in direct communication both with the Euphrates and with Antioch in Syria. Among its celebrated buildings, the temple of Diana occupies a conspicuous place. It was 425 feet in length, and 220 in breadth, and had 127 columns, each 60 feet high. Its magnificence was proverbial. Ephesus was a "free-city," and had its own assemblies and its own magistrates (xviii. 19; xix. 1, &c.; xx. 16).

ETHIOPIA, a kingdom in Africa, corresponding now to Nubia, or Upper Egypt (viii. 27).

FAIR HAVENS, a harbour on the south coast of the Island of Crete, still known by its old name. It lies about four miles to the east of Cape Matala, the most prominent headland on the south of Crete, beyond which the coast turns suddenly to the north. Mr. Smith shows that, as the wind, at the time when Paul's ship attempted to reach the town, was from the north-west, the harbour must have been to the east of Cape Matala, for the ship could not have rounded that cape with a north-west wind on. Accordingly it was when a south wind blew softly that an attempt was made to round Cape Matala and reach Phenice (xxvii. 8).

GALATIA, a large inland district of Asia Minor, somewhat difficult of distinct allocation, as the word is at times used to describe a region inhabited by the Galatæ, and at other times it is used as descriptive of a Roman province. The district was named from the Galatæ, or Gauls, a portion of whom marched, in the third century B.C., from their homes in the west of Europe into Greece, and even penetrated into Asia Minor. There they hired themselves out as mercenaries, and became a terror to all the surrounding tribes. At last they were hemmed in within the territory which became known as Galatia. The Roman province of Galatia was continually changing. It had, speaking generally, Asia on the west, Cappadocia on the east, Pamphylia and Cilicia on the south, and Bithynia and Pontus on the north. The inherent fickleness of the Gauls, whom Cæsar describes as "*avidi rerum novarum*," can be traced in the Galatians. Consult especially the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians (xvi. 6 ; xviii. 23).

GALILEE, one of the Roman divisions of Palestine (i. 11 ; ii. 7).

GAZA, one of the five cities of the Philistines, the last town in the south-west of Palestine, on the high-road between Egypt and the Euphrates ; hence it was important both in a commercial and a military point of view. It is one of the oldest towns in the world, and still exists. We have in the text explained the expression in Acts viii. 26, "*which is desert*," as in all likelihood spoken by the angel, and descriptive of the road and not of the town (viii. 26).

GREECE. The word occurs only once in the New Testament (Acts xx. ii.) ; and it is there used for Greece proper, in opposition to Macedonia.

ICONIUM, the chief city of Lycaonia, situated on the western extremity of an extensive plain, and not far to the north of the range of Taurus. It was on the line of road that led from Ephesus to the Euphrates and Syria ; and hence it was well adapted as a centre for missionary operations (xiii. 51 ; xiv. 1, 21 ; xvi. 2 ; 2 Tim. iii. 11).

ILLYRICUM, an extensive district of country lying along the eastern seaboard of the Adriatic, running as far south as Epirus, and having Moesia and Macedonia on the east (Rom. xv. 19).

ITALY, always used in the New Testament as descriptive of the whole peninsula, stretching from the Alps to the Straits of Messina (x. 1 ; xviii. 2 ; xxvii. 1).

JERUSALEM, the capital of Palestine. (The place is too well known to require description, and the word occurs too often to admit of the references being given).

JOPPA, a sea-port on the south-west coast of Palestine. Until Cæsarea was built by Herod, Joppa was the only harbour in Palestine to the south of

Carmel. It was rocky and dangerous, and lay in a plain, near Lydda, at the end of the mountain road connecting Jerusalem with the sea (ix. 36; x.).

JUDEA, the name given by the Romans to the southern portion of Palestine, but sometimes used of the whole country (i. 8).

LASEA, a city on the south shore of Crete, not far from the harbour of Fair Havens. It was only in 1856 that a yachting party from Glasgow discovered the site of Lasea, which lies a few miles to the east of Fair Havens (xxvii. 8).

LIBYA, a name given to Africa, exclusive of Egypt, Acts ii. 10, where it evidently refers to the district of Cyrenaica.

LYCAONIA, a district of Asia Minor, the exact limits of which cannot be accurately defined. Under the Romans, the district was sometimes in the province of Cappadocia, and sometimes in that of Galatia. Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium were in this district. The vernacular was a language with which Paul was unacquainted (xiv. 11). It was in this district that Ovid placed the scene of the entertainments of Jupiter and Mercury by Baucis and Philemon:—

“Jupiter huc, *specie mortali*, cumque parente,
Venis Atlantides *positis caducifer alis*.”

(Compare Acts xiv. 11-13).

LYCIA, a district of Asia Minor, occupying the south-west portion of the peninsula. Under the Romans, it was at first combined with Pamphylia, but afterwards erected into an independent province, with Myra as its capital (xxvii. 5).

LYDDA, a town in the plain of Saron, about nine miles from Joppa (ix. 32).

LYSTRA, a town in the eastern portion of Lycaonia, the native place of Timothy, and the scene of that miracle of Paul which led to his being taken for a god (xiv. 6, 8, 21; xvi. 2; 2 Tim. iii. 11).

MACEDONIA, originally that part of Greece which was bounded by the Balkan on the north, Pindus on the west, Thessaly on the south, and the Archipelago and Thrace on the east. It was watered by two large rivers—the Axios entering the sea near Thessalonica, and the Strymon near Philippi. Between these two rivers lies the peninsula of the Chersonese, divided into three separate points. When Greece was subdued by the Romans, they divided it into three provinces—Illyricum, along the Adriatic shore; Achaia, corresponding nearly to the modern kingdom of Greece; and Macedonia, which included Thessaly. These three provinces occupied the whole territory between the basin of the Danube and the extreme south of Greece. Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, and Berea, were all in Macedonia. Thessalonica was the Roman capital (xvi. 9, 10, 12; xviii. 5; xix. 21, 22, 29; xx. 1, 3; xxvii. 2; and in the epistles often).

MADIAN, the New Testament form of *Midian*, a name given to the peninsula of Sinai (vii. 29).

MEDIA, a district of Asia, lying to the east of Armenia and Assyria (ii. 9).

MELITA, a small island in the Mediterranean, lying to the south of Sicily, now called *Malta*. In the time of Paul it was attached to the government of Sicily. The island has always been one of great importance. It is needless to repeat the arguments given in the text to prove the identity of Melita and Malta (xxvii. 1).

MESOPOTAMIA, a name given to the district of country which lay between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris (ii. 9).

ILETUS, also called MILETUM, a town of Proconsular Asia, near the coast of the Archipelago, about 20 or 30 miles from Ephesus (xx. 15, 17; 2 Tim. iv. 20).

MITYLENE, the capital of the island of Lesbos, situated on its eastern side (xx. 14).

MYRA, a sea-port of Asia Minor, in the district of Lycia, where Julius transferred his prisoners from the Adramyttian to the Alexandrian vessel (xxvii. 5).

MYSIA, a district of Asia Minor, bordering on the provinces of Asia and Bithynia. The towns of Assos and Adramyttium were in Mysia (xvi. 7, 8).

NAZARETH, a small village of Palestine, situated in Upper Galilee (ii. 22, &c.)

NEAPOLIS, or New Town, a sea-port of Macedonia, the port of Philippi, which lay about 10 miles inland from it (xvi. 11).

NICOPOLIS, or the City of Victory. There were several towns of this name, and it has been disputed in which of them Paul intended to winter (Tit. iii. 21). The most probable view is that it was in Nicopolis of Epirus. This town lay on a peninsula to the west of the bay of Actium, and was built by Augustus in honour of his great victory gained at the place (Tit. iii. 12).

OLIVET, or the MOUNT OF OLIVES, a hill on the east of Jerusalem, from which it was only separated by the narrow gorge known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat (i. 12).

PAMPHYLIA, a district on the southern shore of Asia Minor, lying between Cilicia on the east and Lycia on the west. Attalia was its chief sea-port (ii. 10; xiii. 13; xxvii. 5).

PAPHOS, a town on the western shore of the Island of Cyprus, the residence of the Roman proconsul. It was celebrated in heathen mythology in connection with the worship of Venus, who was fabled to have here risen from the sea (xiii. 6).

PARTHIA, a large district of Asia lying to the east of Media (ii. 9).

PATARA, a sea-port of Lycia in Asia Minor, famous for the worship of Apollo, called in consequence Patareus Apollo (Horace, *Od.* iii. 4, 64)—(xxi. 1).

PERGA, a town of Pamphylia in Asia Minor, on the River Cestius, at some distance from its mouth. The river was navigable to Perga (xiii. 13; xiv. 25).

PHENICE, a harbour of Crete, now called *Lutro*, lying on that part of the southern shore where, beyond Cape Matala, the coast trends suddenly to the north. We have in the text endeavoured to explain the description which Luke gives of it (xxvii. 12).

PHENICIA, called PHENICE, Acts xi. 19, a tract of country lying along the shore of the Mediterranean, north of Palestine, and having the range of Lebanon as its eastern boundary. Its exact limits cannot be defined. Its extreme length may have been about 120 miles, while its breadth at no point exceeded 20 miles. Tyre and Sidon were its two principal towns (xi. 19; xxi. 2).

PHILIPPI, a city of Macedonia, built by Philip of Macedon on the site of a more ancient town, called *Datos*. It lay somewhat inland, about nine miles from its harbour, Neapolis, from which it was separated by a high ridge. It

was a town of very considerable importance, being on the Egnatian Road, the great line of communication between Europe and Asia. In its neighbourhood, high up in the Hæmus, was the oracle of Dionysus, the prophet god of the Thracians. The damsel with a spirit of divination may have belonged to this oracle. At Philippi was fought the last great battle of the Roman republicans. Philippi was a colony—a term which we have explained in the text, as well as the expression “which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia” (xvi. 12; xx. 6; 1 Thess. ii. 2).

PHRYGIA, in New Testament times, was the name of a district and not of a Roman province of Asia Minor. It denotes the western portion of the central part of the peninsula. It contributed portions to several Roman provinces, and varying portions at different times. It is spoken of in the Acts as the district or region of Phrygia (ii. 10; xvi. 6; xviii. 23).

PISIDIA, an inland district of Asia Minor, lying to the north of Pamphylia, and stretching along the range of Taurus (xiii. 14).

PONTUS, a large district in Asia Minor, lying in the north, and skirting the shore of the Black Sea—the Pontus Euxinus—from which the name of the district was derived (ii. 9; xviii. 2).

PTOLEMAIS, or ACCHO, now *Acre*, a sea-port on the coast of Palestine, in the bay formed by the bold headland of Carmel. It lies 8 miles north of Carmel, and 30 south of Tyre (xxi. 7).

PUTEOLI, an Italian sea-port at the north-east angle of the Bay of Naples. It was the great landing-place for all travellers from the East, and for the Alexandrian corn ships. It was in direct communication with Rome by means of the great Appian Road (xxviii. 13).

RHEGIUM, a town in the south of Italy, now called *Reggio*. It lay opposite Sicily, at the southern entrance of the Straits of Messina (xxviii. 13).

RHODES, a famous island of the Archipelago, near the south-west shore of Asia Minor (xxi. 1).

ROME, the capital of Italy. A detailed account of Rome would be out of place in a gazetteer of this description. The reader may consult Smith's Dictionary, or the Life and Letters of St. Paul (ii. 10; xix. 21; xxiii. 11; xxviii. 14, 16).

SALAMIS, a town on the east coast of the Island of Cyprus, in the near neighbourhood of which were famous copper mines (xiii. 5).

SALMONE, a cape on the east point of the Island of Crete (xxvii. 7).

SAMARIA, the central division of Palestine, named after the capital of the northern kingdom (i. 8; viii. 5; ix. 31; xv. 3).

SAMOS, a celebrated island of the Archipelago, not far from the coast of Asia Minor, nearly opposite the point where Ionia touches Caria (xx. 15).

SAMOTHRACIA, a large island in the north of the Archipelago, in the line of vessels sailing from Troas to Neapolis. It is distinctly seen both from Troas and from the hills behind Neapolis (xvi. 11).

SARON or **SHARON**, the name given to that part of the great maritime plain of Palestine which lay north of the Philistine plain, and which extended to Mount Carmel (ix. 35).

SELEUCIA, the sea-port of Antioch in Syria. It was situated at the mouth of the Orontes, 16 miles distant from Antioch (xiii. 4).

SIDON, a very ancient and important city of Phenicia on the Mediterranean, about 20 miles north of Tyre. It lies in a narrow plain between Lebanon and the sea (xii. 20; xxvii. 3).

SINA, the same as **SINAI**, a mountain in that part of Arabia that lies between the two arms of the Red Sea (vii. 38; Gal. iv. 24, 25).

SPAIN, the name of the great south-west peninsula in Europe (Rom. xv. 24).

SYCHEM, a city of Samaria, the same as **SYCHAR**, supposed to be the city of Samaria in which Philip the deacon preached the gospel, viii. 5 (vii. 16).

SYRACUSE, a celebrated city of Sicily, lying on its eastern shore (xxviii. 12).

SYRIA, a name given generally by ancient writers to a wide extent of country, but in New Testament language it is used to describe that district of country which lay to the north of Palestine, having Phenicia and the Mediterranean on the west, Amanus and Taurus on the north, and the Euphrates and the Arabian Desert on the east. Its length was about 300 miles, and its breadth varied from 50 to 150 miles. The chief town in New Testament times was Antioch (xv. 23; xviii. 18; xx. 3).

TARSUS, the chief city of Cilicia—"no mean city"—lay in a wide and fertile plain on the banks of the Cydnus. Augustus made it a free city (ix. 11; xi. 25; xxi. 39).

THESSALONICA, the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia, originally called Therma, and called Thessalonica by Cassander, the son of Antipater, after a sister of Alexander the Great. It lay at the head of the Thermaic Gulf, by which it had communication with the whole of the Mediterranean, while its position on the great Egnatian Road connected it with Rome and the whole region north of the Archipelago. It was a free city. Its modern name is *Saloniki*. It is still one of the most considerable towns in European Turkey (xvii. 1, 11; xx. 4; xxvii. 2).

THREE TAVERNS, an important station on the Appian Road, about 33 miles from Rome (xxviii. 15).

THYATIRA, a city of Proconsular Asia, on the River Lycus, the seat of one of the seven churches of the Apocalypse. It was the native place of Lydia; and it is curious to notice that we have distinct mention of a guild of dyers in this town (xvi. 14).

TROAS (the full name is **ALEXANDREIA TROAS**) lay on the north-west coast of Asia Minor, nearly opposite the Island of Tenedos. From its position it was a town of great importance, and was the port of embarkation for all travellers between the western Asiatic districts and Macedonia (xvi. 8; xx. 5, 6; 2 Cor. ii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 13).

TROGILLIUM, a cape and town on the coast of Asia Minor, in the narrow strait that separates the Island of Samos from the extremity of the mainland ridge of Mycale (xx. 15).

TYRE, an ancient and important city of Phenicia, on the Mediterranean shore. The old town of Tyre was situated on an island, and continued to be so until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. The more modern town was on the mainland (xii. 20; xxi. 3).

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

1. Explain the meaning of the title "Acts of the Apostles."
2. When and by whom is the book supposed to have been written?
3. On what ground has Luke been regarded as a Gentile?
4. Give some account of the chronology of the Acts.
5. Give an account of our Lord's ascension as recorded in the Acts.
6. Mention some of the "infallible proofs" of our Lord's resurrection.
7. Give an account of the election of a successor to Judas.
8. Describe geographically those countries from which those persons came who heard the apostle preach on the day of Pentecost.
9. Give an account of the baptism of the Church by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.
10. Give the substance of Peter's address on the day of Pentecost, and the effect of that address.
11. Describe the character and piety of the early Christian converts.
12. In Acts ii. 44, we read, "all that believed had all things common." In what sense are these words to be understood?
13. Describe the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple.
14. Give an abstract of Peter's address to the multitude on that occasion.
15. Who was the "Captain of the temple"? Was there any reason why he should have a prominent part in the proceedings recorded in Acts iv.?
16. Give as much as possible in the words of the Bible the defence of Peter and John when they were before the council (Acts iv.)
17. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 33). Give examples of this, and assign reasons for the evidence of the resurrection being specially insisted upon by the apostles.
18. State what is recorded in the Acts of Barnabas.
19. What was the exact sin of Ananias and Sapphira?
20. How may it be shown that their death was a divine judgment?
21. What effect was produced by this miracle of judgment?
22. How do you reconcile Acts v. 13 with the 14th verse of the same chapter?
23. Give an account of the deliverance of the twelve as recorded in Acts v.
24. Who was Gamaliel? Quote his advice to the council, and explain the historical circumstances to which he refers.
25. Explain the terms "Grecian" and "Hebrew." Distinguish between "Grecian" and "Greek."

26. Give an account of the first appointment of deacons. What is to be said of their duties?
27. What were the charges brought against Stephen?
28. Give an abstract of Stephen's apology, and show how it bears upon the charges brought against him.
29. Explain any difficulties that occur in Stephen's apology.
30. What is related in the Acts of Philip the deacon?
31. Give an account of the planting of the Church in Samaria, and account for the ready reception of the Gospel there.
32. State what is known of Simon Magus.
33. Give an account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch.
34. Explain the word "desert" in Acts viii. 26.
35. State what is known of Paul previous to his conversion.
36. Give an account of Paul's conversion.
37. Compare the accounts of this conversion as given in Acts ix. ; xxii. ; xxvi. ; and reconcile any apparent discrepancies that appear in these accounts.
38. What do we know of Paul's life between his conversion and his arrival in Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26)?
39. Give an account of the healing of Æneas.
40. Describe the raising to life of Dorcas.
41. How did God prepare Cornelius for the reception of the Gospel?
42. How did God prepare Peter for his visit to Cornelius?
43. Give the exact import of the vision to Peter on that occasion.
44. Give the substance of Peter's address in the house of Cornelius.
45. Explain fully Acts x. 34.
46. What inference did Peter draw from the fact that the Holy Ghost was poured out upon Cornelius and his house?
47. Why did not Peter himself administer the rite of baptism to the household of Cornelius?
48. Where and by whom was Peter's conduct in the case of Cornelius called in question?
49. Give the substance of Peter's defence on that occasion.
50. Give an account of the planting of the Church in Antioch in Syria.
51. What remarks have you to make upon the word "Grecians" in Acts xi. 20?
52. Give an account of Paul's proceedings from the time he left Jerusalem (Acts ix. 30) until Barnabas brought him to Antioch (Acts xi. 25, 26).
53. How do you account for the origin of the word "Christian"?
54. What is known of Agabus?
55. Who was "Herod the King"?
56. Give an account of Peter's miraculous deliverance as recorded in Acts xii.
57. When was the deliverance effected?
58. Who was the James mentioned in Acts xii. 17?
59. Give an account of the death of Herod the King.
60. What position does the Church in Antioch hold in reference to missions to the Gentiles?
61. When and why was the name "Paul" substituted for "Saul"?

62. Explain the exact meaning of the term "deputy."
63. Who was Elymas?
64. Give an account of the conversion of Sergius Paulus.
65. Give an abstract of Paul's address in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia, and compare it with Peter's address on the day of Pentecost.
66. How did Paul justify his conduct in turning to the Gentiles when the Jews rejected his message (Acts xiii. 46, 47)?
67. Give an account of the preaching of the gospel in Iconium.
68. Describe the healing of the lame man in Lystra.
69. Give an abstract of Paul's address to the people of Lystra, and compare the arguments used in addressing Jews and Gentiles respectively.
70. Describe the organisation of the early Christian communities (Acts xiv. 21-23).
71. Give a connected account of Paul's first missionary journey.
72. Describe the first missionary meeting of which we have an account (Acts xiv. 27).
73. Relate the circumstances which brought together the apostles in consultation in Jerusalem (Acts xi.)
74. In what essential particulars did the teaching of the Judaising Christians on the question of justification differ from that of Paul?
75. State the arguments for and against the circumcision of Gentile converts, and mention that which decided the question in the council held in Jerusalem.
76. Quote the letter sent to the Gentile converts by the council held in Jerusalem.
77. What account have we of this council in the Epistle to the Galatians?
78. When does the incident recorded in Galatians ii. 11-21 seem to have occurred?
79. How do you account for Peter's conduct as detailed in this portion of the Epistle to the Galatians when compared with his speech recorded in Acts xv. 7-11?
80. How did Peter receive Paul's rebuke (2 Peter iii. 15, 16)?
81. What led to a rupture between Paul and Barnabas?
82. Show that Mark afterwards regained the good opinion of Paul.
83. Show how you can reconcile Paul's conduct to Timothy as recorded in Acts xvi. 1-3 with his conduct to Titus as given in Gal. ii. 3.
84. Explain the word "Asia" in Acts xvi. 6.
85. When were the churches of Galatia in all likelihood established?
86. How was the apostle led to visit Europe?
87. What change in the form of the narrative occurs at Troas, and what inference may be drawn from this change?
88. What remarks have you to make on the expression—"Philippi, which is the *chief city* of that part of Macedonia, and a *colony*" (Acts xvi. 12)?
89. Give account of—
 - (a) The conversion of Lydia.
 - (b) The dispossession of the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination.
 - (c) The conversion of the Philippian jailer.
90. What relations existed between Paul and the Philippian Church?

91. Describe the transactions that happened in Thessalonica and Berea.
92. Where was Athens, and what was its social condition when Paul visited it?
93. With what two philosophic sects was Paul brought into contact in Athens? What were the leading tenets of these sects respectively?
94. Give the substance of Paul's address on Mars' Hill.
95. What observations have you to make on the passage—"As I passed by and beheld your *devotions*, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD" (Acts xvii. 23)?
96. What was the fruit of the apostle's preaching in Athens?
97. With whom did Paul associate himself on his arrival in Corinth? Why?
98. What Epistle was written shortly after Paul's arrival in Corinth? What circumstances led the apostle to write this Epistle?
99. How long did Paul remain in Corinth?
100. What do we learn from the Epistle to the Corinthians regarding, (a) The social standing, (b) The moral condition of the bulk of the converts in Corinth?
101. When, and in what circumstances, was the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians written?
102. Give an account of the insurrection against Paul in Corinth under Gallio.
103. What do we know of Paul's movements from the time of his leaving Corinth until his arrival in Antioch?
104. What do we know of Apollos?
105. Who were some of Paul's fellow-labourers in Ephesus?
106. How can it be shown that the preaching of the Gospel in Ephesus was accompanied with great success?
107. Explain these words or phrases:—"Special miracles;" "Vagabond Jews, exorcists;" "Curious Arts;" "Silver shrines for Diana;" "Chief of Asia;" "The city of the Ephesians is a *worshipper* of the great goddess Diana;" "The image that fell down from Jupiter;" "Robbers of churches;" "A lawful assembly."
108. When, where, and with what special objects was the First Epistle to the Corinthians written?
109. Give an account of Paul's journey from the time he left Ephesus (Acts xx. 1) until his arrival in Greece (Acts xx. 2).
110. When, where, and with what special objects was the Second Epistle to the Corinthians written?
111. What led the apostle to write the Epistle to the Galatians? Where and when is it supposed to have been written?
112. What Epistle was written from Corinth during Paul's second visit to that town?
113. For what purpose did the persons mentioned in Acts xx. 4 accompany Paul into Asia?
114. Give an account of the raising of Eutychus.
115. Describe Paul's voyage from Troas (Acts xx. 13) until his arrival in Ptolemais (Acts xxi. 7).

116. Give the substance of Paul's address to the Elders of Ephesus.
117. What reception did Paul meet with from the Church in Jerusalem?
118. What was the nature of the vow which the Church in Jerusalem wished Paul to take, and what was their object in this proposal?
119. What led to the arrest of Paul by Claudius Lysias?
120. Give an abstract of Paul's address to the Jews from the stairs of the castle in Jerusalem.
121. Compare this address with the historian's account of Paul's conversion as given in Acts ix.
122. Give an account of Paul's appearance before the council as detailed in Acts xxiii.
123. Narrate briefly the circumstances that led to Paul's being sent as a prisoner to Cæsarea.
124. What were the charges brought against Paul before Felix, and show how the apostle refutes them.
125. State what you know regarding Felix. What may we learn from the narrative in the Acts regarding his character?
126. Contrast the character of Felix with that of Porcius Festus.
127. Give an account of the trial before Festus.
128. Give an abstract of Paul's address before Agrippa.
129. Describe the voyage to Rome and the shipwreck.
130. What arguments can be adduced in favour of Malta as the scene of the shipwreck?
131. What is recorded in the Acts of Paul's imprisonment in Rome?
132. What do we learn from Paul's Epistles of his labours in Rome during his first imprisonment?
133. What Epistles were written during the first imprisonment?
134. State briefly the circumstances which led to the writing of the
 - (a) Epistle to Philemon.
 - (b) Epistle to the Colossians.
 - (c) Epistle to the Ephesians.
 - (d) Epistle to the Philippians.
135. What evidence can be adduced to show that Paul's trial before Nero resulted in his being set at liberty?
136. Give a connected view of the apostle's labours between his first and second imprisonments.
137. What are the Pastoral Epistles, and in what circumstances were they written?
138. What is known of Paul's death?

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS.

1. Account for the good opinion which the people entertained of the apostles at the outset of their ministry, and trace the causes which led to a change in this feeling.

2. In Acts vi. 14, we are told that one accusation against Stephen was that he had said that "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered." Is there any similar accusation in the Old Testament, or elsewhere in the New? In what respects does the charge appear to have been true? How does Stephen's defence bear upon it?

3. Show that it is likely that Saul was active in disputing with Stephen, and in compassing his death.

4. Where were Azotus, Gaza, Lydda, Saron, Cæsarea, and Damascus, and what events are associated with these places?

5. Describe the situation and importance of Antioch in Syria.

6. On what occasions was Peter cast into prison in Jerusalem, and under what circumstances was he set free?

7. Narrate the events of Paul's first apostolic journey. Give a map.

8. Describe the planting of the Church in Antioch in Pisidia, in Philippi, and in Corinth.

9. Compare the arguments used by Paul in addressing Jews and Gentiles respectively.

10. What persecutions of the Christians as a body, or of any individuals or parties among them, are recorded in the Acts? Is there any difference in character discernible between the earlier and later persecutions?

11. What is known of the following persons mentioned in the Acts:—Apollos, Erastus, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Trophimus, Gallio, the high priest Ananias (Acts xxiii. 2), Herod the king (Acts xii. 1), Agrippa (Acts xxv. 13)?

12. What Epistles of Paul were written during the time covered by the Acts of the Apostles?

13. In chap. iv. 21, we read of the apostles, that the rulers "let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people." In chap. xxii. 22, we read of Paul that the multitude lifted up their voices, and said: "Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." How do you account for this change in popular feeling?

14. Paul told the elders of Ephesus, "I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." What controversy has arisen on this passage?

15. State the extent of Paul's labours, as given in the Acts of the Apostles.
16. What is known from Scripture of Priscilla, Phoebe, Eunice, Rhoda, Lydia?
17. What were the provinces of Asia Minor in Paul's time?
18. Where were the following places situated, and what events are associated with each—Lystra, Ephesus, Thyatira, Troas?
19. Trace the differences in the characters of the apostles before the death of Christ and after his ascension, and account for them.
20. Prove, by quotations from the sermons preached by the apostles, that, wherever they preached, the resurrection of Jesus was the prominent feature of their teaching.
21. Mention any statements or expressions in the Book of the Acts that serve to indicate the writer of it, and the time of its completion, showing how they do so.
22. Describe the transactions at Ephesus, Miletus, and Melita, recorded in the Acts.
23. Compare the miracles recorded in the Acts of the Apostles to have been wrought by Peter and Paul, or two discourses of these apostles.
24. Describe the character of Paul after his conversion, giving texts or facts in support of your statements.
25. Enumerate the instances recorded in the Acts of the first preachers of the Gospel being taken before heathen magistrates. What were the accusations brought against them on these occasions?
26. Give an account of the uproar at Ephesus. Explain such words and circumstances as are likely to give inadequate ideas to children.
27. Collect together out of the New Testament all that is recorded of Timothy.
28. Give an account of the persecutions recorded in the first twelve chapters of the Acts, and especially of the conduct of the apostles when persecuted.
29. Write out the chief passages which describe the character and conduct of the first Christians.
30. Enumerate briefly but distinctly the facts which show the rapid extension of the Church after the death of Stephen.
31. Name all the companions of Paul mentioned in the Acts.
32. On what occasions do these names of persons and places occur:—Sosthenes, Jason, Cenchrea, Mnason, Miletus, Myra, Puteoli, Julius, Publius?
33. How does the Book of the Acts explain Paul's statement in 1 Thess. ii. 2? Give full particulars.
34. Mention the several occasions on which Paul claimed the rights of a Roman citizen.
35. Give some account of four of the following places:—Seleucia, Philippi, Tarsus, Ptolemais, Damascus, Cæsarea, Melita, Syracuse, Appiæ Forum.
36. What is meant in the Acts by *Asia, Phrygia?* Explain these expressions:—“*Passing by Mysia*”—“*Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of*

Macedonia, and a colony"—"Gallio was deputy of Achaia." What was the extent of Achaia?

37. Make a connected narrative of the events which befell Paul after he was taken prisoner by Lysias, until his arrival in Rome.

38. On what occasions are the following names mentioned in the Acts:—Rhoda, Timothy, Jason, Lydia, Mnason, Lysias, Tertullus, Trophimus.

39. Name all the Roman governors mentioned in the Acts, and from their conduct draw conclusions as to the aspect in which they viewed the first preachers of Christianity.

40. What arguments are used by Paul in his discourses at Lystra, Athens, and before Festus and Agrippa?

41. What privileges of a Roman citizen can you find in the history of the Acts of the Apostles? How were they acquired? What was a colony?

42. Give Paul's address at Athens, and explain his argument against idolatry.

43. Give a brief abstract of Stephen's speech. Whence is taken the passage quoted from the prophets? In what respects does it differ from the words of the Old Testament? What was the "tabernacle of witness"? Why was it so called?

44. Give an account of Felix. Was there any special reason why he should wish to show favour to the Jews? What indications are there in the Acts of the Apostles of different classes of Roman governors with different titles?

45. Collect all that is said in the Acts of the Apostles of the growth of the Church in Ephesus. What more do we know about it from the Epistles or the Apocalypse?

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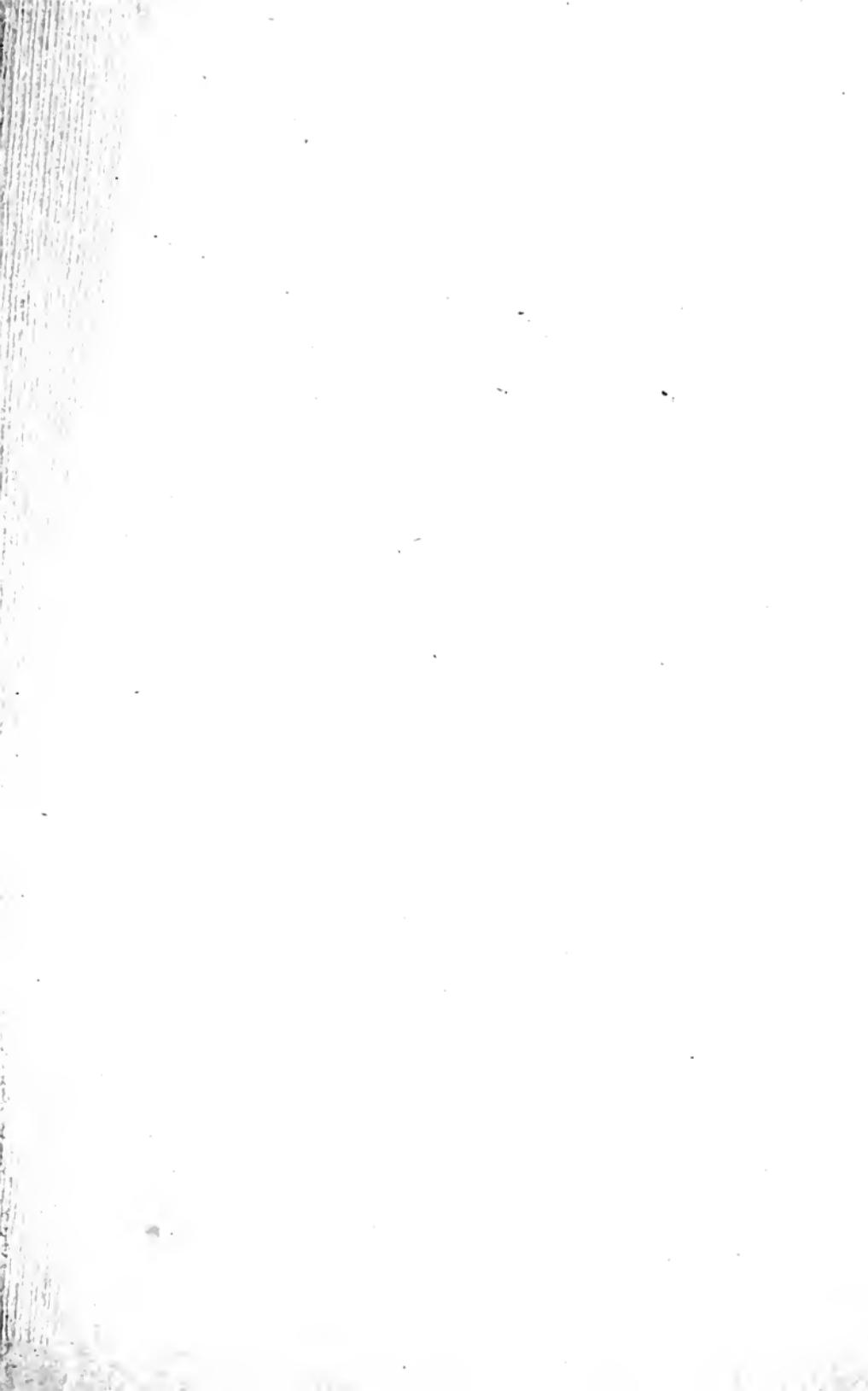
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